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Changing conditions in the American health care system are leading doctors to organize a national labor union on interns and residents.

Docs prescribe themselves: union

By Dan La Botz

Doctors, whose incomes average \$105,000 per year, according to the American Medical Association (AMA), may seem unlikely candidates for union organization. But changes in the American health care system are increasingly turning doctors into employees, and some of these highly skilled workers are turning to unionization as a way to change conditions.

In April a group of hospital housestaff unions met in New York to form a national labor union of interns and residents—the National Federation of Housestaff Organizations (NFHO). The meeting was called at the initiative of the Committee of Interns and Residents (CIR) of New York and New Jersey, founded in 1957. It now represents about 4,700 interns, residents and fellows at 50 public, private and voluntary hospitals.

"Housestaff have always been in the forefront of union organization because they are the first and largest concentration of salaried doctors," says Jonathan House, M.D., executive director of CIR. "The average doctor may earn \$105,000, but not the average doctor coming out of training. Almost all doctors now in training will spend most of their working careers as salaried physicians."

In 1979, 53.2 percent of active physicians received most of their income from salaries—209,520 out of a total of 393,730. But by the year 2000, about 80 percent of all doctors will be salaried.

There is growing talk of unionization because interns and residents typically work about 100 hours per week, including shifts of 32 hours every third or fourth day when they are "on-call." Salaries range from about \$20,000 to \$30,000 per year, depending on experience and local union organization.

Recent trends have increased the pressure on the housestaff. The number of facilities owned by big hospital chains has increased by 72 percent, from 438 in 1978 to 755 in 1983. These corporations put profit before both the interest of patients and doctors, and are increasingly competitive.

Their drive to reduce costs in private hospitals coincides with growing austerity in the public sector. The federal government pays 30 percent of the nation's health costs, and Medicare pays for about 40 percent of all patient-days in the acute-care hospitals. Changed Medicare regulations under the Reagan administration have reduced the number of Medicare patients at private and voluntary hospitals, resulting in greater "patient dumping" at the public hospitals. About 40 percent of hospitals are being phased into a "prospective" payment system based on what are called diagnosis-related groups or DRGs; under this system payments will be set for specific illnesses. These changes have led to attempts to cut hospital costs by lay-offs, hiring freezes, contracting out and increasing the work load of interns and residents.

Housestaff have picked up the slack when nurses, blood-drawers, technicians, messengers and transporters have been laid off or gone unhired. Not only has this aggravated the situation for the doctors, but it has threatened the care of patients. The House Staff Association (HSA) at Cook County Hospital in Chicago recently fought for—and won—a demand for \$2 million more in the budget to hire an additional 160 ancillary staff, without which, according to HSA President Sherry Baron, M.D., "patients would get sicker and in some cases might die."

While the history of interns' and residents' unions goes back to the '30s, a trend toward labor organization at voluntary hospitals began in the mid-'70s when New York interns and residents struck for union recognition and contracts. Though the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled in the 1976 "Cedars-Sinai" decision that housestaff were "students" and not employees under the National Labor Relations Act, it did not rule that housestaff unions were illegal. Housestaff in private and voluntary hospitals continued to organize, though unregulated by the NLRB, and interns and residents in public hospitals organized in many cases under the provisions of state public employee bargaining laws.

But organizing the doctors has not been easy. It's often a question of reorganizing, as was explained by Pam Hess-Sass, M.D., a resident in Family Medicine at Brookdale Hospital in Brooklyn, N.Y. CIR had a local unit with a contract, but the union was broken in 1976. Two years ago some Brookdale housestaff began to organize anew because, according to Hess-Sass, the administration had created a "Student Council" type housestaff organization that failed to represent the doctors' interests. Recently the CIR offered organizing assistance to the Brookdale housestaff, which seems to be moving toward collective bargaining and a contract.

Similarly, at Montefiore Hospital in New York the CIR unit was broken in a disastrous strike in 1981, but now the housestaff are organizing again. They won a recent victory when they stopped the administration from withholding checks to punish doctors for allegedly violating hospital policies. The patronizing attitudes of management are also a sore spot there. One doctor complains that "they treat us like we're their children."

Today there are strong housestaff unions on both coasts and a few in between. Jointly calling the Conference of Housestaff Organizations in New York on April 27-29 were the CIR, the Joint Council of Interns and Residents in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Interns and Residents Association, the Cook County House Staff Association and the Housestaff Association of the Childrens Hospital National Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

As the doctors organize, they are increasingly identifying with the organized labor movement. "CIR has been active in regional labor

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organizations," House explains. "Many of our achievements would not have been possible without the support of the labor movement." The CIR actively supported the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) and the Greyhound strikers, and also worked on the New Jersey "right-to-know" and plant closing bills.

The impetus now to form a National Federation of Housestaff Organizations (NFHO) has been aided by a 1983 California Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) ruling that housestaff at the University of California are employees with the same organizing rights as other workers. Seven housestaff organizations in California then formed CAIR, the California Association of Interns and Residents, to organize the 4,000 housestaff in the U. of C. system. But with limited resources for a major organizing drive, CAIR is looking to a national organization for assistance.

It won't be the first such national organization. In the late '70s, interns and residents across the country created the Physicians National Housestaff Association (PNHA). Made up of members who might or might not belong to local unions with contracts, the PNHA suffered an identity crisis—it wasn't clear whether it was a national labor union, an alternative to the medical establishment or a political platform. Taking on a national organizing drive with a staff of three, the PNHA collapsed in 1981 after the CIR withdrew its support.

The groups forming the National Federation of Housestaff Organizations hope to succeed where PNHA failed. "The difference," says House, "is that ours is an organization of housestaff unions with more limited goals."

Other unions—from the International Longshoremen's Association to the American Federation of Teachers—have made overtures toward the various housestaff unions and will no doubt be interested in a national union of housestaff. But, House says, "Affiliation with an international union has been under consideration for a long time. But we would prefer to make such a decision in concert with the entire housestaff movement."

Dan La Botz writes regularly for *In These Times* on labor.

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By David Moberg

CHICAGO

TOO BATTERED TO CONTINUE on its own, too big to cast to the sharks of the market, Continental Illinois Bank was saved from a Titanic fate by the buoyant support of the federal government. Continental had failed, much as Chrysler had gone bankrupt, but the government spared much of the pain in an effort to prevent panic and preserve the banking system.

Yet the deeper sources of instability have not been addressed. There were specific reasons why Continental, the nation's seventh largest bank, became the worst banking crisis in the U.S. since the Great Depression. But many of its problems were symptomatic of those threatening other big banks. Other lesser crises—such as those involving Franklin National Bank, Penn Square Bank, the Hunt brothers silver schemes, Drysdale Securities and other institutions—all threatened to get out of hand yet have been contained.

"You get a series of muffled crises," said David Felix, professor of economics at Washington University, "but that makes the next stage more difficult to muffle."

These repeated crises—as much as fear of renewed inflation, growing concern over the structural deficit in the federal budget or worries about Third World political unrest—create a sense of anxiety among financial manipulators. This general nervousness has multiplied the "risk premiums" charged and pushed real interest rates [the difference between the rate of inflation and the nominal interest rate] to post-war highs. Yet rising interest rates boost the risk to the entire system even higher by dampening recovery and pushing Third World debtors to the brink of default: a 1 percentage point increase would raise Third World interest payments \$3-\$4 billion, according to *Politics and Markets* newsletter.

The banking system has gone wild, pursuing a course of world-wide expansion and short-term speculation in search of growth and profit that had drastically eroded any governmental regulation, even before the U.S. government began its own conscious policies of deregulation. Increasingly the banking system not only fails to facilitate the functioning of the productive economy, but it is also in conflict with it and undermines it.

Throughout the '70s, when all big banks were aggressively expanding and experimenting, Continental was one of the most daring. It cut rates to get business and sought out anyone who was interested in borrowing money.

Continental's "creativity" led it overseas, in the footsteps of the big New York banks: in 1970 only .2 percent of its earnings came from international sources; in 1980 it was up to 28.1 percent. But Continental's most pressing problems came from its creativity in domestic loans to ventures in real estate, energy and mid-size corporations. In stagflationary times, those were proving profitable. But with the deep recession of 1981-83, which precipitated the bust in oil and gas exploration, Continental was especially vulnerable. Last year business bankruptcies reached their peak since 1932 and 48 banks failed—the highest number since the Depression.

If Continental had suffered more from bad loans to Third World governments, it might have been in better shape. Political considerations would have led the government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to prevent those loans from officially failing.

Instead, speculative domestic energy companies went bankrupt, dragging the Oklahoma-based Penn Square Bank, which had sold more than \$1 billion of its loans to Continental. Many of those loans were bad; many, it turned out, had never been investigated by Continental but hurriedly bought in an effort to grow faster. Continental was deeply implicated in Penn Square's failure, argues Hyman

Continental: Just tip of the iceberg

Minsky, a banking expert who is professor of economics at Washington University. "Continental Illinois was shouting, 'Give us paper, give us paper.' It was an agent provocateur," he said. "The man who gets syphilis by going to a whorehouse is not an innocent bystander."

Already heavily dependent on inter-bank transactions from the unregulated Eurodollar market, Continental was forced to rely even more on those overseas deposits. Continental also had to pay premiums because of the bank's shakiness. That cut margins of profit.

More bad loans cropped up. With shareholder equity of \$1.8 billion, Continental held \$2.3 billion in nonperforming loans with another \$400 million, including \$65 million in Latin American loans, that may soon be counted as nonperforming. That made the bank technically insolvent.

But earlier this year some observers thought that new Chairman David G. Taylor had problems under control. He persisted in declaring a bank dividend two or three times as large as other big banks and financed it out of the sale of the bank's profitable credit card division. It was an "incredibly stupid" move, according to Minsky. "If you're living off capital, you're a bad risk. People start running."

Like most big banks, more than 90 percent of Continental's funds came from institutions with deposits over the insured limit of \$100,000. Those depositors had new reasons for edginess. In March the

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) announced a new policy that uninsured depositors would be victims of market discipline if banks failed. For seven of the 28 banks that have failed so far this year (a rate one-third ahead of 1983), the rule applied.

Rumors about Continental's problems continued to spread. European and Japanese banks withdrew money or demanded higher premiums. On May 8 news stories reporting rumors of bankruptcy or merger finally precipitated a massive run by Japanese banks, followed by Europeans and then major American depositors. With cooperation of the Federal Reserve Board, a group of 16 major banks provided a short-term \$4.5 billion loan fund to protect Continental depositors. That was replaced on May 17 with \$2 billion in federal assistance through the FDIC and a larger safety net of \$5.5 billion.

Equally important, the Federal Reserve and FDIC guaranteed that no depositor, no matter how large, would lose anything.

"With Continental Illinois that whole rationale—deregulation and market discipline, that the uninsured have to suffer losses—is down the drain," said Edward Herman, professor of finance at the Wharton School.

International banking has undergone a vast change in recent years. U.S. banks have followed American corporations on a march overseas. Also, banking has been profoundly altered by the enormous unregulated supply of Eurodollars—nearly

\$1 trillion or just less than half the U.S. money supply by conservative estimates—and the telecommunications revolution that speeds transactions and international flows of money.

After years of caution and solidity, banks increasingly moved to what Minsky has labeled the "frontier of risk." Younger bankers, undaunted by Depression fears, pursued more aggressive tactics. Like any other capitalist business, banks were driven by their own internal dynamic to match each expansion and risk of its competitors to grow and profit. The Euro-dollar market, greatly expanded by OPEC "petrodollars" after the 1973 price increase, offered more money to loan.

Adventurous bankers pressed loans on developing, especially Latin American, countries and the Soviet bloc countries. Very large deals, supposedly secure because they were government-backed, were made recklessly (most of the Argentine loans, for example, were tossed down rat-holes of junta boondoggles or military expenditures). Banks were encouraged in these risky loans by the U.S. government, Herman argues, to become "joint partners" in propping up allies, whether nominally democratic like Venezuela and Mexico or authoritarian regimes like Argentina and Brazil.

Eastern bloc loans had a similar appeal—big deals made swiftly with the presumed backing of the Soviet government. Now the international banking fraternity is falling out with American banks abandoning Europeans in Eastern Europe, Europeans abandoning American banks in Latin America.

To a large extent, deregulation of banking in the U.S. acknowledged what had already happened: banks had changed into much broader, multinational profit-seeking corporations. Yet, Felix said, "the whole business is based on the notion you're dealing with peanut farmers rather than the central control mechanism of capitalist society. You're allowing the go-go guys to chase the buck without requiring fiduciary responsibility. The idea that you can deregulate financial markets and they'll work smoothly is a crazy notion. In these times, it's dangerous."

But to a growing degree all international economic activity is subjected to the ebb and flow of funds in the unregulated international market. Many multinationals make much of their profit from currency speculation. In the U.S., the expected "crowding out" of private borrowers by public borrowing to cover the deficit has been minimized by the massive flight of foreign investors to dollar holdings. (Since until Reagan private debt had been growing much more rapidly than public debt, it is perhaps more correct to say private borrowing has been crowding the public.)

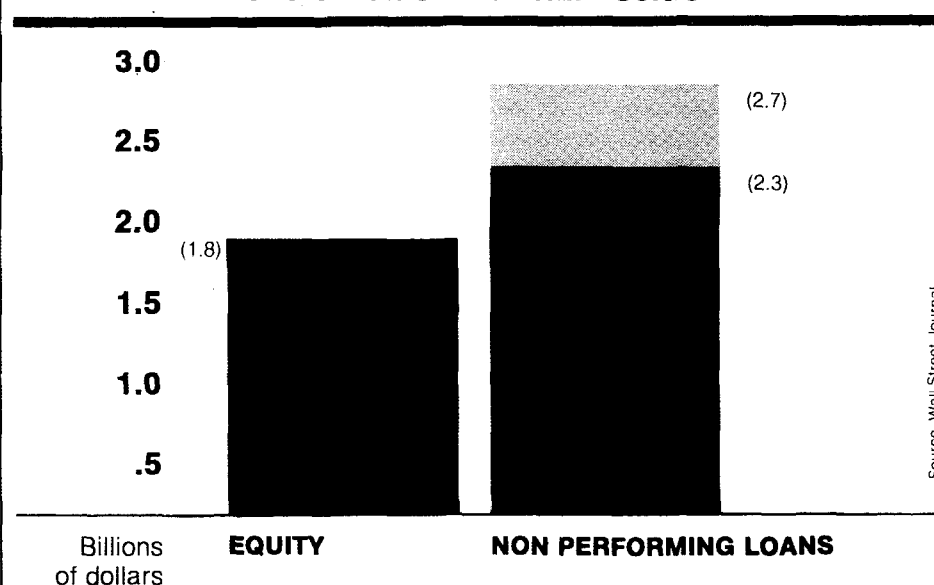
But a flight from the dollar, just like the flight out of Continental, is equally possible. Michael Moffitt, author of *The World's Money*, thinks the chances are likely to increase if a Democrat replaces Reagan (despite financial manipulators' worries about Reagan's botched budget). In the past, either Britain or the U.S. has stood as a political power behind the main trading currency to regulate and stabilize the international market. Less and less can anyone play that role.

What can be done? If some banks are so big that they cannot be allowed to fail, then they are also big enough to require closer public control. Moffitt argues for a halt to deregulation, especially banks entering non-banking activities. "The banks haven't proven they can run the banking business," he said. "Why let them take over all securities? We've had an unregulated international market and this [Continental] is the consequence."

Increasingly banks can avoid most national regulation, which was never very effective anyway. Yet something will have to be done soon about Third World loans. Some observers recommend new constraints on lending, and Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul Volcker wants a cap on interest rates, with unpaid interest added to the loan. Felix recommends an

Continued on page 10

Continental's Financial Position



IN SHORT

Coup de jour, Chicago-style

As *In These Times* went to press, Chicago's Council Wars had reached a new apogee when the opposition 29 went after Mayor Harold Washington on May 23 for filing his annual financial statement three weeks late. Alderman Ed Burke, claiming that "Harold Washington has forfeited the office of mayor," dropped the matter at the door of a Cook County Circuit judge.

Washington took to the airwaves later in the day, assuring the city that "I am the mayor" and ordering calm. He later admitted that a mix-up in his office caused the late filing, but said that he had complied with "the spirit of the law"—financial accountability. Both the city's chief attorney and the man who helped draft the financial disclosure law said they do not expect Washington to lose his job over the issue. But the opposition was successful in embarrassing Washington and adding to the racial polarization of the city. Observers speculate that Burke *et al.* had a more immediate goal in mind—to further delay the confirmation of Dorothy Tillman, an outspoken black community leader that the mayor has appointed to fill a vacant Third Ward aldermanic position.

Atomic vets: "no nukes"

They still see themselves as patriots, though their patriotism now compels them to speak out against the military policies they once loyally followed. Members from the International Alliance of Atomic Veterans (IAAV), a coalition of atomic veterans from six countries, recently traveled to the Nevada Test Site to warn fellow citizens of the danger of possessing and testing nuclear arms. Their Memorial Day disament message was a "statement that truly serves people, as a patriot should," according to the director of the IAAV, Anthony Guarisco. By "returning to the scene of the crime" they also hoped to drum up support for compensation for the irreparable harm caused by their exposure to radiation.

More than 250,000 U.S. vets were exposed to atmospheric nuclear weapons testing between 1945 and 1962. These men—described by the IAAV as "conservative, middle age and middle class"—form a natural anti-nuclear bloc that "governments cannot easily dismiss." Though once feeling that their exposure was a dangerous and costly mistake made by their respective governments, many atomic vets now think the risks were more calculated. Some, including Guarisco, cite a recently discovered British military document that asks the officers involved in nuclear testing to "discover the detailed effects of various types of explosion on equipment, stores and men with and without various types of protection." Guarisco first filed a claim with the Veterans Administration for compensation for his heart, lung and bone disorders caused by his exposure to two "Bikini bombs." His claim was rejected, as an overwhelming majority are, because the VA claims the linkage between his radiation exposure and his diseases is "unproven." Guarisco, deciding that it's time to go to the source of the problem, recently filed a suit against federal laboratories that design nuclear weapons because "the only reason we're in the nuclear arms race is that profits are being made from it."

ELF attacks

Memorial Day—official day to wax patriotic and unofficial harbinger of summer—was also the kick-off day for the summer-long Women's Peace Presence to Stop Project ELF. Project ELF is the Navy's proposed communications network in northern Wisconsin and Michigan that is denounced by peace groups as a "first strike trigger" for nuclear-bearing Trident subs. The women held their opening day rally at the Ashland County Memorial Gravesite in Wisconsin, a 153-acre parcel of land reportedly designated as a burial ground in the event of a nuclear attack. Working to avert just such an attack, the women had hoped to establish a permanent base for their vigil and actions in the north Wisconsin woods, but so far have had no luck in raising the necessary \$10,000 for a 40-acre piece of land. However, according to organizer Jenny Pressman, they still intend to continue their campaign by camping out near ELF lines or in houses nearby.

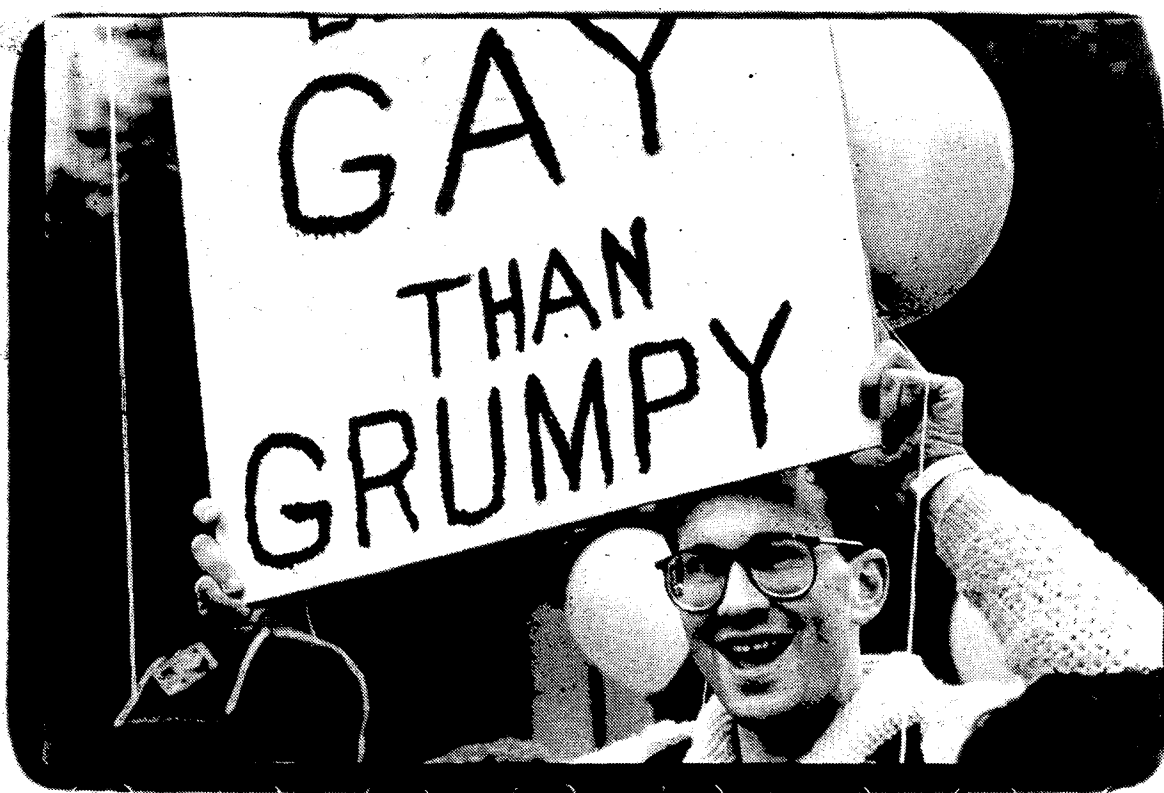
And in next-door upper Michigan, the Citizens Against Trident/ELF celebrated the February ruling that halted the construction of Project ELF until a new environmental impact statement (EIS) can be written. (See *In These Times*, Feb. 22). Said Michigan organizer Jo Turvey, "The Navy only has to update the studies, they don't have to prove that ELF is safe. But some of us have been working on this for more than 10 years, so it's time to celebrate even the small victories." Part of the projected summer strategy: continue last summer's "desurveying" by tearing down the remaining 16 miles of survey marks that the Navy uses when stringing ELF's power lines.

Summer sign-up

Twenty years after Mississippi's Freedom Summer, two student groups and Humanserve are organizing their version of voter sign-up. Their project—also called Freedom Summer—seeks to register more than 500,000 voters in targeted cities across the country. More than 250 college students start this week as registrars at social service agencies and hundreds others are expected to join the project throughout the summer.

Students who're interested in working on 1984's Freedom Summer should call the United States Student Association at (202) 785-1856.

—Beth Maschinot



Neither rain nor fundamentalist counter-demonstrators dampened the spirits of marchers at the third annual Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade in Northampton, Mass. Between 1,500 and 2,500 marchers turned out for the May march, which was held only after Gay and Lesbian Activists, the organizers, successfully sued the city of Northampton for the right to march.

Black officer convicted

NEW YORK—A U.S. Marine corporal who argued that his religious beliefs prevented him from joining his unit in Lebanon was convicted last week of being absent without leave and missing a troop movement. Attorneys connected with the case say it is the first of its kind to be heard since the Vietnam war.

Corp. Alfred Griffin, a 22-year-old machine gunner, was convicted following a two-day court martial. Presiding Judge Lt. Col. Charles D. Breme sentenced the corporal to four months at hard labor and gave him a bad conduct discharge.

On Oct. 17, 1983, Griffin left his post at Camp Lejeune rather than ship out to Lebanon. The next day, attorneys at the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights agreed to defend him, with civil rights attorneys William Kunstler, Ron Kuby and Randolph Scott-McLaughlin heading the defense team.

Griffin is a Black Muslim. He was born and raised in Chicago, where the Honorable Elijah Mohammed founded the Nation of Islam (currently called the American Muslim Mission) in 1932. Ten years later, Mohammed was convicted of encouraging draft resistance and sentenced to five years in federal prison.

During his own trial, Griffin testified that he could not risk the "disgrace" of firing at fellow Muslims. The prosecutor, Capt.

James Marino, called for the maximum sentence, saying that Griffin "left a lot of people in the lurch" when he failed to accompany his unit. But attorney Kunstler argued that fighting in Lebanon would have been a betrayal of Griffin's religion.

Oddly, military authorities delayed over a month in bringing formal charges against Griffin. His unit shipped out for Lebanon on October 18, but he was not referred to a special court martial until November 29. During the intervening six weeks, Griffin was offered the "opportunity" to rejoin his unit, now stationed in Grenada, and to take part in the U.S. military action there, with the assurance that his earlier act of rebellion would be forgotten. Griffin refused: he said he couldn't fire on blacks either.

Defense strategy, if it had not been hampered by the military's procrastination in levying charges, would have centered around the presentation of a "Nuremberg" defense. That defense will be raised in the subsequent appeal. Center attorneys say they are prepared to prove that U.S. military participation in Lebanon violated acceptable principles of international law, by which the U.S. is bound. Therefore, they plan to argue, Griffin was not obliged to participate in the occupation of Lebanon. In fact, they assert, he had a duty to refuse.

Griffin enlisted in the Marine corps at the age of 19, seeking training and employment. He was part of the so-called "poverty draft." He has a flawless record and has served in a Presi-

dential Honor Guard. Griffin is only one of many black soldiers giving thought to the nature of recent U.S. military engagements. Military sources (refusing to be quoted directly) admit that black soldiers, with a history of outstanding performance, are lately reluctant to fire in battle at blacks or Third World civilians. To counter this wave of heightened consciousness, the Marine Corps is attempting to become "blond haired and blue eyed," according to Maj. A. O'Donnell of the First Marine Recruiting District of New York.

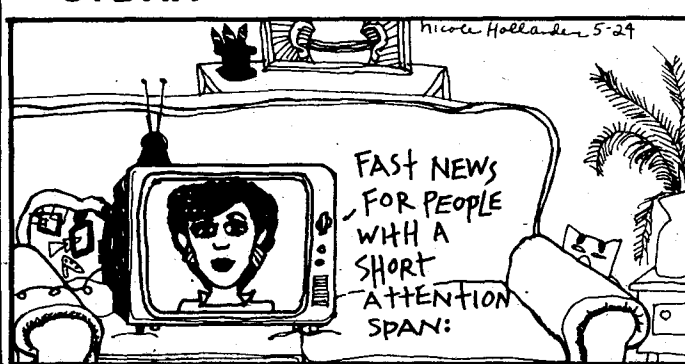
The Center for Constitutional Rights is urging all concerned citizens to write their congressional representatives about the Griffin case. They say in the present climate, with the military stunned over the Marine death toll in Beirut and the retreat from Lebanon, only public pressure can assure Corp. Griffin even the semblance of a fair trial.

—Barbra Day

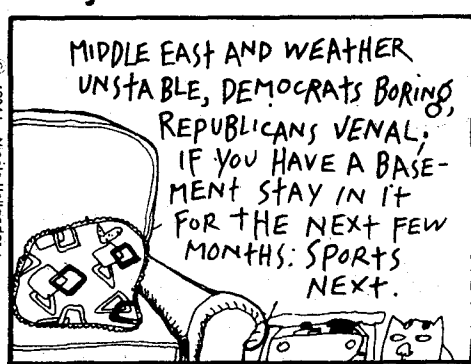
Homelessness: Reagan lie

NEW YORK—In the first official acknowledgement by the Reagan administration of the extent of homelessness in the U.S., the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released a report on May 1 that claimed that 250,000-350,000 is "the most reliable range...of the total number of people, nationally, who were homeless on an average night in December 1983-January 1984."

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander



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The report was immediately denounced by homeless advocates around the country as politically motivated and inaccurate. Mitch Snyder, a spokesman for the Center for Creative Nonviolence (CCNV) in Washington, D.C.—an organization that shelters and feeds approximately 2,000 homeless men and women daily—said the report was "so statistically unacceptable and faulty in terms of methodology and procedure that it should be withdrawn."

Previous estimates of the number of homeless by Reagan administration officials ranged from two to three million. Margaret Heckler, secretary of Health and Human Services, said in November 1983 that she was leading a federal campaign "to house and feed an estimated two million homeless Americans." One homeless advocate in New York said the May report was prepared to "deflect unwanted attention from Heckler's remark."

The HUD researchers used four sampling methods to determine their estimate: local published figures, interviews with local experts in 60 metropolitan areas, interviews with shelter workers and street shelter counts. The figures ranged from 192,000 to 586,000, and HUD settled on 250,000 to 350,000 as the best estimate.

Kim Hopper of the Coalition for the Homeless, an advocacy organization centered in New York, questioned all four procedures and the totals they produced. As an example of the contradictions in the study, Hopper said, one estimate of homeless in New York—12,000—was cited when there were 16,000 people inside shelters and countless more on the streets. Said Hopper, "This is really an opinion study, not a statistical numbers count."

The HUD report claims that homelessness is caused by chronic disabilities, personal crises and general economic conditions. But it shuns any real investigation of the effects of the recession of 1982-83, the shrinking housing market and massive unemployment in contributing to the increase in homelessness in recent years.

While HUD denied political motivations in preparing the report, homeless advocates have begun to organize to counter its findings. Hopper said the Coalition is studying the report to prepare a response. Snyder of CCNV believes the report demonstrates the Reagan administration's continued willingness "to play fast and loose with the truth," and that it may help undermine the credibility of the report on hunger in America.

Robert Hayes, counsel for the Coalition for the Homeless, said that the numbers are "transparently political," and that more pressure should be placed on what HUD is actually doing about the homeless, not on the distorted figures. Hays added that the agency recently lobbied against a \$60 million appropriation for shelters for the homeless.

"Reagan is so cynical that he thinks that if he comes out with a report that claims people are not on the street in the numbers that have been said, then it takes care

of the problem," said Snyder. "Unfortunately, it just doesn't work that way." —Richard Miller

Farmers meet to survive

IOWA CITY, IA—When Wayne Crits spoke at the Humeston Sale Barn in mid-March, more than 500 local farmers gathered to hear the Missourian. Last year, Crits had assembled an impromptu tractorcade to recover his stored soybeans, held hostage in a grain elevator that had gone bankrupt.

In late March, the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition brought together farm survival committee leaders legislation, organizing and tactics for dealing with creditors. The meeting provides training in how to delay the day of judgment for the 10 percent of Iowa farmers expected to succumb to an ailing farm economy by the end of next year.

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Robert Lounsbury issued that estimate, saying that 5 percent of the state's 115,000 farmers would go under in 1984, and 5 percent the following year. Rural America director David Ostendorf calls the causes of bankruptcy the "lethal combination" of low prices, high interest rates and declining equity as massive numbers of farm failures drive down land values.

Farm failures are not endemic to Iowa, of course. But the Iowa Farm Unity Coalition has taken the lead in many areas of farm organizing and in developing organizing models for other areas in the nation. Working out of the Rural America office in Des Moines, they have organized farm survival committees in 36 of Iowa's 99 counties and are holding new meetings elsewhere almost weekly.

The South Central Committee at a recent meeting in Chariton discussed the economic repercussions of the high farm failure rate in Lucas County—an average of four farms in every township are expected to close down due to a wilting economy and last year's severe drought. The local businessmen present were warned of declining sales as a result of lost farm income, the loss of revenues for the school systems due to land value losses and the outmigration of young farm families with children.

The committees are also learning the intricacies of dealing with the federal farm credit system and the banks in a crisis environment. And after concluding that people were being deliberately discouraged from applying for federal disaster loans after last summer's drought, one committee called for the ouster of Robert Pim, Iowa director of the Farmers Home Administration.

The primary legislative initiative of the coalition recently failed, however. A bill to declare a moratorium on farm foreclosures emerged from the Iowa Senate Commerce Committee by a 7-2 vote and then failed to make it onto the Senate calendar in time for a vote.

—James Schwab

James Schwab received funds from the Reader's Digest Foundation to research farm closings.

Briefing: Technology and guns don't spell jobs

There are still people around who think that "high tech" and "military spending" are two magic phrases that translate into one result: jobs. Two new studies cast doubt on those beliefs.

The High Tech Research Group recently evaluated what "high tech"—industries stressing technological innovation—has meant for Massachusetts. Mainly they focus on three categories—electronics, non-electronic (chemicals and drugs plus military gear) and high tech services. Though "high tech" is usually associated with new industries (like computers or biotechnology) even many venerable industries could—and should—emphasize technological innovation.

The group argued that the recent low unemployment rates in Massachusetts owe less to high tech than to job growth in other sectors and a decline in the workforce. And now job growth in high tech is slowing. One of the big problems is that as companies become successful they shift work not only to

to be strongly anti-union. "Quality circles" and other plans to improve work are often turned against workers who raise serious issues. As with many industries, bedroom communities get the factories and accompanying problems. In any case, most jobs are far removed from inner-city minorities.

The report's debunking is valuable, but the problems related to high-tech are often the same as those in most industries in contemporary American capitalism. High tech may not be a panacea, but it is a mistake to write it off rather than figure out how technological advance in all areas can be promoted for the good of workers and their communities.

(The report, "Massachusetts High Tech: The Promise and the Reality," is available for \$8.00 from High Tech Research Group, Box 441001, West Somerville, MA 02144.)

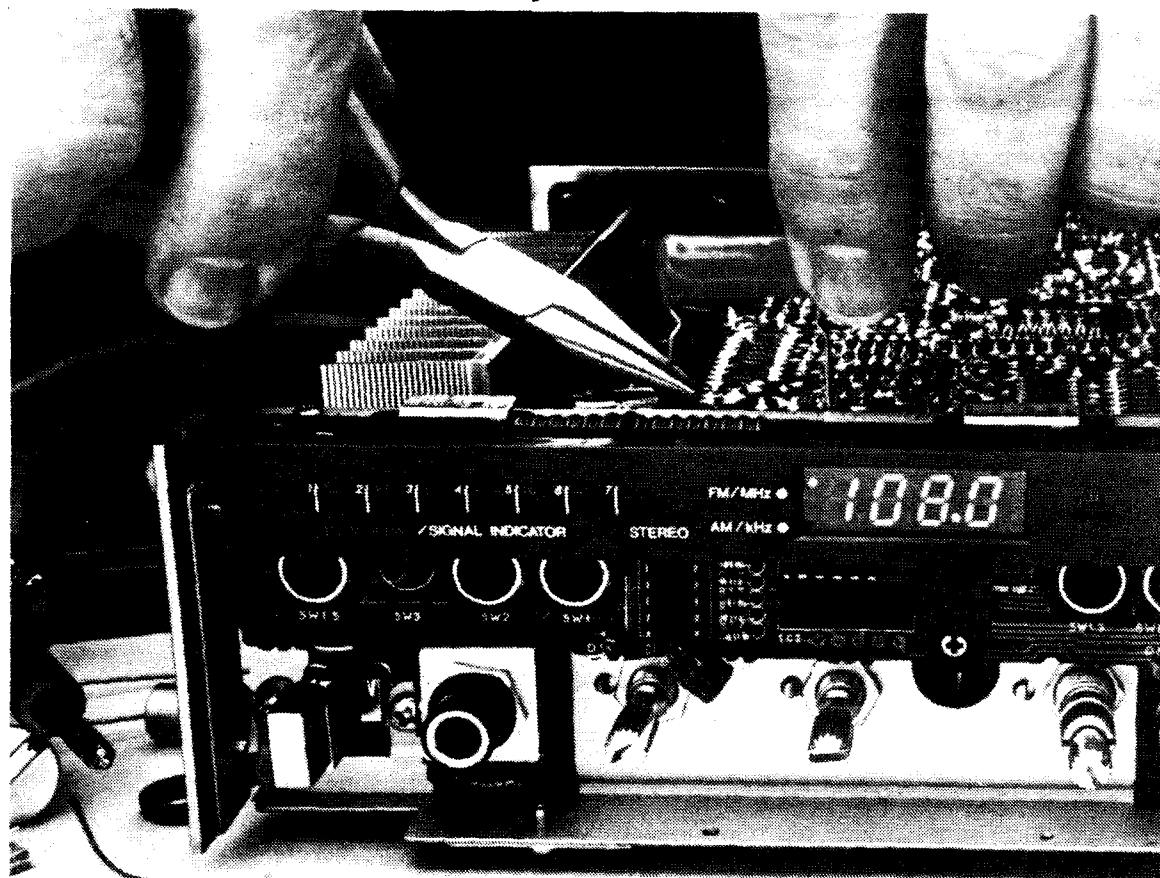
The United Food and Commercial Workers, along with the Machinists and the West Coast Longshoremen, were among the most active

be spent on other pressing needs and produce as much as 150,000 more jobs than the military spending does.

The benefits of increased nuclear weapons spending are very concentrated—mainly in eight big firms and their sub-contractors and in 11 states. Clearly, in those instances some federal economic conversion program would be necessary—such as the one sponsored by Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY).

Some economists challenge the studies Hartung uses that show military spending producing fewer jobs: often they incompletely utilize the input-output tables for the economy, neglect secondary effects of military spending or fail to distinguish between large numbers of low-paying service jobs and a smaller number of high-paying technical jobs. Whatever the merits of those critiques, Hartung maintains that his report demonstrates at the very least that a freeze would not harm the economy.

The big question, he agrees, is where would the money go? Reducing the deficit with the savings would provide the least benefits; using the money directly for housing, infrastructure or alternative production would provide more. Typically military spending has been acceptable because it is a gov-



other parts of the U.S. but also overseas. "The response of Massachusetts-based high tech firms to increased world competition has been to increase its investment overseas," they report. For six leading firms, 28 percent of employment is overseas and 32 percent in other states. That has happened despite comparatively low wages in Massachusetts and tax cuts some high tech firms demanded.

The jobs that remain are good work for technicians and professionals, but "for production workers—who make up more than half the industry's workforce—high tech means low-wage, dead-end jobs with tedious work." There are significant health and safety problems, although less than in the dirtiest, most dangerous fields, and the companies tend

unions opposing money for the MX missile recently. A few aerospace locals lobbied for it, but the rest of the labor movement largely held back (a bonus for MX opponents, since the AFL-CIO officially supports the MX). If they read William Hartung's *The Economic Consequences of a Nuclear Freeze*, published by the Council on Economic Priorities, some of their fears about cut-backs in spending might be allayed.

Hartung argues that halting nuclear arms production would save \$98 billion in the next five years, more than \$400 billion between now and the end of the century. That money could restore most federal programs on education, nutrition, welfare, health and safety and urban block grants that have recently been cut. Or, he argues, it could

ernment monopoly (at least as a market). But other government production plans can begin to compete with private industry. Ultimately the issue is: can the government plan for any ends other than war?

An International Economic Conversion Conference (IECC), sponsored by a long list of unions, military conversion projects, disarmament groups and social justice organizations, will grapple with some of those issues June 22-24 at Boston College. Information on the conference is available from IECC, 2161 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140.

(*The Economic Consequences of a Nuclear Freeze* can be bought for \$14 from CEP, 84 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011. A free summary is also available.)

—David Moberg

IN THE NATION

LABOR



A May 19 march and rally in support of the strikers drew 1,500 supporters.

Sheboygan strike drags on as NLRB looks the other way

By David Moberg

SHEBOYGAN, W.I.

DON SPITLER HAS MADE HIS mark in town. Shortly after he arrived a year and a half ago, he nudged the popular president of R-Way Furniture Company into retirement. Then he asked workers in the century-old firm to forego their scheduled pay increase. They refused.

A couple of months later, he asked that the contract be reopened for substantial wage cuts. When the members of the United Furniture Workers of America refused, he unilaterally cut wages. When they filed grievances, he delayed every step of the way, forcing them to arbitration, which he delayed even further. Spitler or his supervisors sneaked up on workers to time their piecework performance, then unilaterally changed their pay rates.

When the contract expired last January 10, Spitler—or rather, his attorney, since he refused to negotiate with employees at the small factory—demanded extensive concessions and big pay cuts. The workers struck. A few weeks later Spitler began hiring strikebreakers. When a union member from another factory tried to photograph him accompanying strikebreakers on their regimented march into the factory, Spitler punched him in the face.

As the strike drags on, community support for the strikers has grown. The AFL-CIO has put R-Way products—mainly office and institutional furniture—on its boycott list. Retirees stop by the union hall and leave part of their week's groceries and members of other unions in the area send food, money and supporters.

Many local business people are perplexed and angered by Spitler's behavior. "He's got to be a rare bird," one local

factory owner said with dismay. A banker recently sent a couple of checks for strike support. Meanwhile, every one of the 135 strikers—one-third of them women—is holding the line and refuses to join the strikebreakers.

The success the strikers have had so far is a result not only of Spitler's errors and arrogance but also of the diligent work by the union, which has struck a responsive chord in the area. On May 19 they had the second major march and rally of the strike, drawing more than 1,500 supporters from a wide range of local unions and Furniture Workers from as far as Grand Rapids, Mich., and Memphis, Tenn. It was a festive march, punctuated with choruses of "No way, R-Way" and modified civil rights songs imported by the delegation of two dozen black workers from Memphis to the nearly all-white town. As the line reached the old, four-story, gray brick R-Way factory near the river, strikers and their families lined up to shake hands with each marcher in a solidarity receiving line.

"We made the long trip from Memphis because we want to support our brothers and sisters just like Ronald Reagan wants to go down to El Salvador to help his folks—the dictators," said Willie Rudd, president of Local 282 and a vice president of the international. "We didn't have to go overseas, just drive 12 hours to help real friends of this country and labor."

Back at the union hall, there was abundant grilled bratwurst and beer, appropriate in an area nearly two-thirds of German ancestry and a town that claims to be "the bratwurst capital of the world." In the early part of the century, this city of 50,000 on Lake Michigan shared in the style of socialist politics famous in Milwaukee, an hour's drive south. But the region also gained notoriety in labor annals for two extraordinarily long strikes in the '30s and '50s at nearby Kohler

Manufacturing that pitted the Kohler family against 2,000 workers.

Now some Sheboygan residents worry that the strike could doom R-Way. At one time there were 27 furniture factories in the Sheboygan area. Now there are probably a half-dozen. Decline of the local hardwood forests, mismanagement and bankruptcy, flight to the South, foreign competition and other forces have eroded the furniture industry.

Spitler, who refused to talk to *In These Times* and has generally avoided public comment, may be finishing R-Way: he has already lost a \$5 million contract from Steelcase, estimated to be at least one-third of the company's annual sales, as well as some other contracts, such as dormitory furniture for Marquette University. The plant manager, production manager and some foremen have reportedly quit since the strike started. Quality has suffered with inexperienced strikebreakers. "They're idiots," scoffed one foreman who showed up at the brat fry in support of the strikers. "The company either settles or it goes under."

Local business angered.

Local business people feel threatened by the effects and angry, most of all, at management. Robert H. Leverenz, chairman of the board of his family's shoe manufacturer, was proud of his 40 years of negotiations with a union without a strike or threat of a strike.

A couple of months ago he offered to mediate. "You bet there's concern," he said. "The people I know in management are embarrassed over the way an outside company has treated our local people. We're embarrassed a company president would hit a guy in the nose. We're embarrassed that he's been so detached from this community that nobody knows him. I inquire on the street if anybody knows Mr. Spitler, and nobody does. It's like he's insulated himself from the main-

stream of the community.

"From all I can gather, he has presented a take-it-or-leave-it drastic wage cut proposal," Leverenz continued. "We in management feel it's a black mark against all of us who don't believe in treating people this way. I live in this community and love it and don't like to see my fellow citizens fighting and don't want to see a refusal to talk. And the only refusal to talk has been on the part of the company."

"The union responded favorably within 24 hours to my offer to mediate. The company has never granted me the courtesy of a reply, not even a reply to jump in the lake. I've frankly never, ever encountered such behavior. I'm amazed the National Labor Relations Board [NLRB] has apparently ignored unfair labor practices by this company. It seems the union has no recourse at all. The company doesn't respond, and the NLRB says to work it out at the bargaining table."

Things were not always this way at the company. Even after a local old rich family sold the firm in 1962 to Franklin Industries—a division of the privately held United Industrial Syndicate conglomerate under the direction of New Yorker Harry Lebensfeld—the local manager had amiable relations with the Furniture Workers. In 35 years the union never went on strike and filed only five major grievances. In the past year and a half, 190 have been filed. Most concerned the same issue: unilateral pay cuts or rate changes averaging 70 cents an hour but at times as much as \$4 an hour.

Spitler insisted on arbitrating each separately, greatly delaying justice and raising expenses for the 1,600-member amalgamated local union. Although the NLRB eventually ruled against Spitler's demand, the grievances still dangle while further hearings take place and arbitrators are selected.

Spitler has used every possible delay. "It took two months to get to the first step meeting, and you've got three steps to go through before reaching arbitration," chief steward Tom Hameister complained.

"The company has the view that labor law is ineffectual, and they can do what they want to do," union attorney Herbert Adams said. "They know they can't unilaterally change wages in the middle of a contract. They may lose, but they'll get the money and figure eventually we'll settle out."

As the contract expiration date approached, union leaders formed a 30-member "solidarity committee" instead of just the usual two to three-person bargaining committee. "They made the negotiations more open, more public," said national education coordinator Ed Warshauer. "We took the company positions and distilled them into the essence of their ugliness and made them into slogans. Each solidarity committee member wrote out the company proposals in their own handwriting. They were assigned to make personal contact with each worker in the plant."

Three weeks before the contract was up, the union distributed "I'm Proud to Be Union" buttons with the condition that every union member in the plant had to wear one every day. It was so successful that Spitler and the foremen responded by wearing the same button. In doing that Spitler attempted to downplay the button as a sign of union solidarity in opposition to his demands. So the union escalated with a variety of stickers with slogans that each worker could choose: "Open the books," "Union-busting: no way at R-Way," "Unnecessary cuts: no way at R-Way." There were meetings, at least once with a large delegation of supporters from other unions. When the strike vote was taken, only one negative ballot was cast. Everybody stayed out.

Remarkable in any circumstance, it was particularly so in a local with no history of strikes, located in a community with fairly high unemployment (including several hundred workers who had just lost factory jobs when one plant closed and another burned) and with a history of division within the local even in recent years (one group had protested that they

Continued on page 10

By Diana Johnstone

L I S B O N

TEN YEARS AFTER THE "RED carnation revolution," Portugal is now ruled by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the national mood is one of political disenchantment. Similar disenchantment prevails in Spain and has spread throughout Latin Europe, but seems most at home in the land of the *fado*. For centuries, Portugal has known that its destiny was in the hands of greater powers. Now it is waiting for its fate to be decided by Europe and America.

The 10th anniversary of the April 25, 1974, bloodless coup that ended Europe's oldest and laziest dictatorship was marked by two rival celebrations in Lisbon. The stiff official celebration with Prime Minister Mario Soares and Marshal Antonio de Spínola resembled the semi-counterrevolution being carried out by the present government. It was opposed by an informal popular celebration organized by the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) which was a much bigger success. The separate celebrations were a fit commemoration of a split event.

The Portuguese revolution of 1974 was essentially a modernization operation—sought by the more enlightened sectors of the Western ruling classes and entrusted to Gen. Spínola—that got out of hand. In February 1974, just two months before the revolution, he published a book acclaimed in the Western media titled *Portugal and the Future*. Spínola, who had fought with Franco in the Spanish Civil War, clearly had powerful support to lead a reform movement, probably in the form of a coup.

But the operation went astray because three factors coincided: the Communist Party had built a strong organization and spread revolutionary ideology despite, or because of, harsh repression; the exploited and largely rural working class was more similar in many ways to the Third World than to the rest of Europe; and, most decisively, Third World revolutionary ideology influenced (thanks to the African liberation movements they had been sent to combat) the young officers who went ahead and overthrew the wobbling regime of Marcelo Gaetano.

Now the Socialist-Social Democratic (PSP-PDS) coalition government headed by Mario Soares is again aiming at the original goal of a moderately liberal society open to international capital. Radical land reform and nationalization measures of 1975 have been whittled away. New laws have been introduced to limit press and other freedoms.

Why such restrictions in the absence of any sign of popular revolt? One theory is that the austerity measures imposed by the IMF are going to squeeze the working class even harder. Already unemployment is running at 12 percent, more than 100,000 workers have not been paid in months and the cost of living is going up as the income is held down. Repressive measures may be in anticipation of worsening conditions that could produce a popular explosion, or (which seems more likely) they may simply be just another way to make Portugal an appealing place for foreign investment, despite the presence of a militant Communist Party.

In the Iberian peninsula there is a tendency to blame the Germans for unpopular policies carried out by Mario Soares or Felipe Gonzalez. After all, both the Portuguese and Spanish Socialist parties were sponsored and financed by the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). Disgruntled leftists accuse them of "taking orders from the Socialist International."

But Soares in particular has moved far enough to the right of the SPD to cast doubt on this theory. A recent article in the SPD weekly *Vorwärts* blasted Soares for squandering money on military equipment while Portuguese children go hungry. Hans-Roland Fassler wrote that the IMF, "the Inquisition agency of the world banking system," had imposed its drastic remedies in return for a mere \$400 million credit line, whereupon Soares

turned around and agreed to buy three new NATO frigates at a price of \$600 million. The SPD paper wondered if Soares was "cleverly using the pressure of the IMF" to "abolish the achievements of the carnation revolution—land reform, nationalization and workers' control over means of production—while pointing to the mean capitalists in Washington."

Confessing his ignorance of economics, Soares has let the IMF dictate policy. And during his recent trip to Washington, he gave the U.S. all the facilities requested: permission to transform Lajes base in the Azores for use by the Rapid Deployment Force, establishment of a Ground Electro-optical Deep Space satel-

versary, President Antonio Ramalho Eanes. Except for the Communists, all Portugal's main political forces seem to have this aspiration: join the Common Market.

Yet there is general recognition that joining the EEC would be "an economic catastrophe" for Portugal. The country imports about half its food, much of it from non-European countries. Grain, for example, comes from the U.S., meat from Argentina. EEC taxes would drive these food costs up. (This similarity with Britain's situation enforces French suspicion that Portugal will be a "Trojan horse" for Britain—its oldest ally—and the U.S. inside the Common Market.)

As for industry, the Portuguese can-

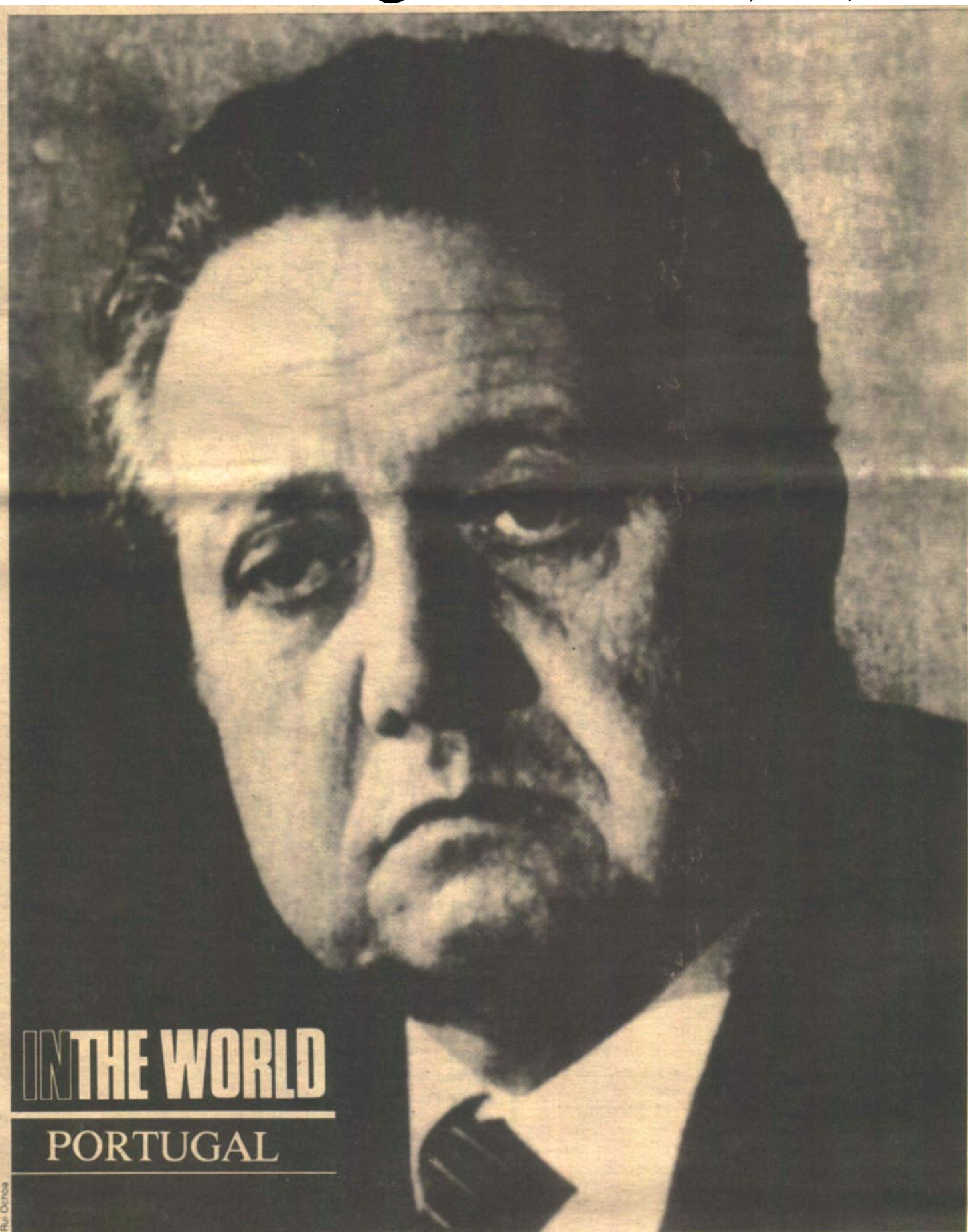
IN THESE TIMES MAY 30-JUNE 12, 1984 7
in the hope that the resulting wasteland will appeal to international capital and that Portugal will be granted a viable place in the new world economic division of labor. As far as the public can see, this is an act of faith—or of fatalism.

Luis Moita, coordinator of a Third World documentation center in Lisbon, believes Portugal's main weakness lies in the inability to define an autonomous social project. The old bourgeoisie that ran the country under Salazar and Caetano was "decapitated" figuratively by the nationalizations, which persuaded many to emigrate. Those who remain "lack a unifying project," says Moita.

In groping for a national project, the Portuguese time and again turn their gaze toward Africa. That is where, as President Eanes said in a recent interview in *Le Monde*, Portugal has its "vocation."

But the Portuguese can't decide what to do with it. They have a wealth of experience and knowledge of their former colonies in Africa, where 20 million people speak their language. "Europe should understand," said Eanes, "that with Por-

Where have all the carnations gone?



IN THE WORLD
PORTUGAL

lite tracking system in Andalucia and use of all Portuguese airports "in case of need"—American need, that is. He also reportedly gave the U.S. authorization to build a secret nuclear submarine base on Porto Santo island near Madeira.

One school of thought has it that Soares is handing the Americans all they want to "give the Europeans—especially the French—a scare" so they will let Portugal into the European Economic Community (EEC) this year. Portugal is a country adrift with one national goal; on this point, there is even agreement between Soares and his bitter political ad-

didly admit that theirs is not competitive. "If Portugal joined the Common Market, small, medium and even big Portuguese businesses would go bankrupt," predicts a member of President Eanes' entourage. "They simply could not compete with the European giants. But we may be the Taiwan of Europe, with cheap labor to draw foreign investment."

Portuguese leaders talk about Europe's duty to Spain and Portugal, and being admitted to the Common Market appears to be a matter of national pride. Like the IMF measures, joining the EEC means dismantling existing economic structures

Prime Minister Mario Soares is so unpopular that he no longer dares make public appearances.

tugal inside, cooperation with Africa will be easier."

For centuries Portugal operated as a subcolonial power under the British wing, and the country's leaders would now like to see this role revived under European auspices. But there is widespread feeling that so far Soares has badly botched Portugal's "vocation" in Africa.

The Armed Forces Movement officers
Continued on following page

Continued from preceding page... who made the 1974 revolution carried through a rapid decolonization that laid the groundwork for reconciliation. But this was undermined from the start by Soares, who persuaded the government in Lisbon not to recognize the Angolan government when it proclaimed its independence in November 1976. Soares said the U.S. had informed him there was no point in recognizing a government that would soon be overthrown by UNITA and other guerrilla movements back-

ed by South Africa and the CIA. Even some right-wing Portuguese complain that Soares' doctrinaire anti-Communism has been harmful to Portuguese interests in Africa.

When Soares was out of office, relations improved. But since he came back last fall, he has influenced banks to cancel credit lines that would have financed a dam project in Angola involving 17 Portuguese companies and Portuguese exports to Mozambique.

Soares hoped to be rewarded for his ef-

orts by succeeding Eanes as president in December 1985, but this should prove a difficult ambition for a leader who no longer dares make public appearances for fear of boos and catcalls. Some observers predict that after a few more months of IMF policies, Soares will be too unpopular to present his candidacy.

Polls show that if a presidential election were held today, Soares would lose to Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, who made a strong impression on the country when she was prime minister for four months in 1979. From a Catholic background, cultivated and internationalist, Pintasilgo expresses a populism with strong appeal.

Her ideas on "deepening direct democracy" are especially attractive in this period of disenchantment with political parties. There are signs, however, that her hypothetical candidacy is a stalking horse for the Eanes clan, if not for Eanes himself, who is constitutionally barred from seeking a third term in 1985. Still, the success of the unofficial April 25 celebration and Soares' unpopularity have encouraged "left Eanesism"—a non-partisan and indeed nondescript coalition that talks of creating a party this summer. A strong presidency expressing left populist ideology would seem well suited to lead a *rapprochement* with Africa. But first Portugal—or Europe—would have to outline a project for such a *rapprochement*.

The Armed Forces Movement junior officers who made the revolution have been silenced, marginalized, stuck in ob-

scure administrative posts, while promotions are preferentially granted to right-wing officers. Soares managed to get Army Chief of Staff Gen. Garcia dos Santos, who played a part in the April 25 coup, replaced by conservative Gen. Salazar Braga.

One government motive for total obedience to the Pentagon is the hope that NATO can find a new mission for the Armed Forces other than leading domestic revolution, now that the colonial wars are over. The young revolutionary officers proved their disinterested idealism by turning over power to the political parties, with no profit to themselves. The parties, in contrast, seem to have profited by undoing some of the best of the revolution.

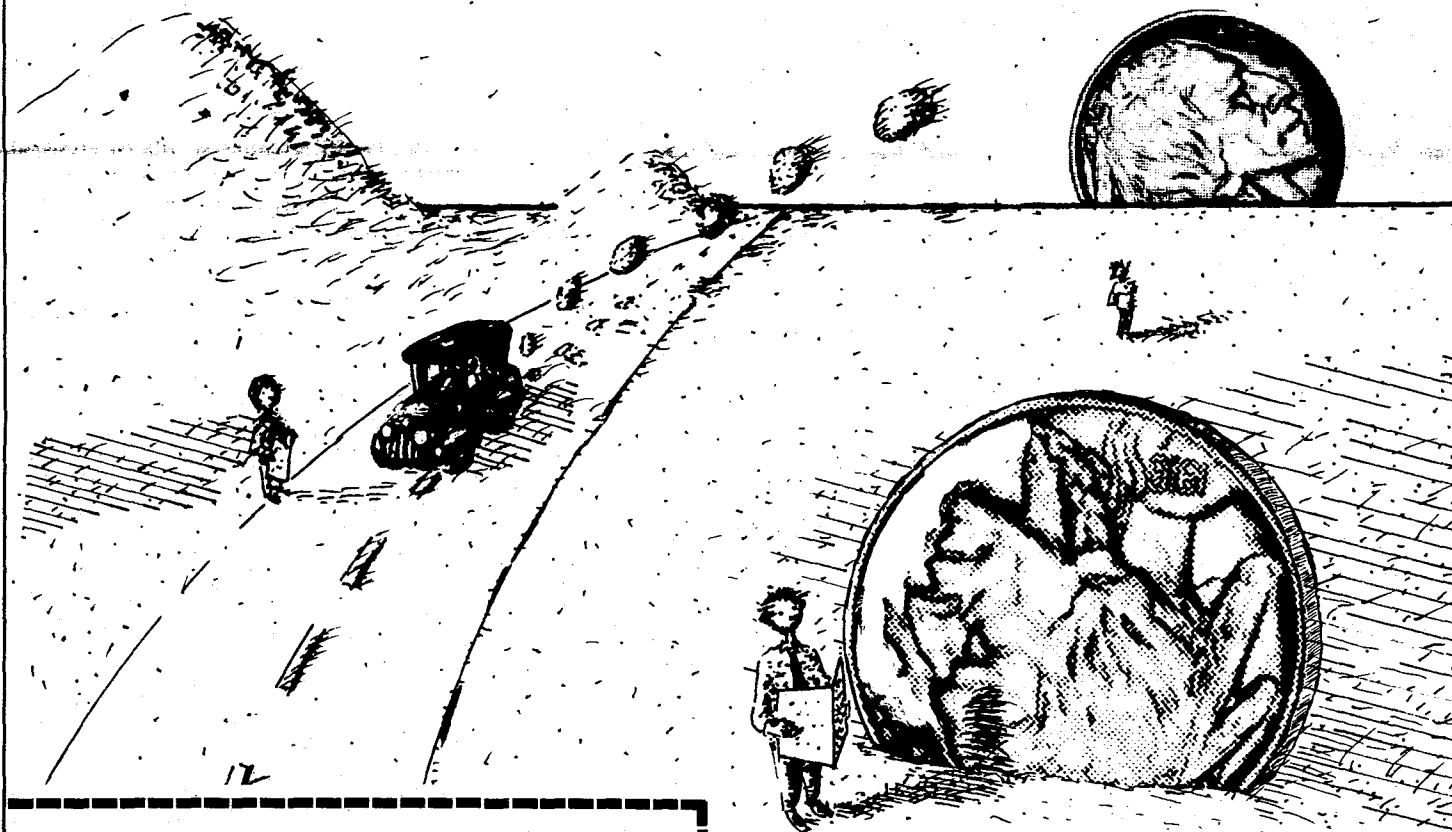
Disenchantment has even affected the Communist Party. In its Alentejo stronghold, there is some bitterness and disappointment that the party was unable to defend the collectives from the government measures that gave back the best land to former landowners. In Portugal as elsewhere, job precariousness makes workers harder—not easier—to mobilize, despite very real grievances. Still, the pro-Soviet PCP has electorally held its own with close to 20 percent of the vote. Thus, it is doing better than many Eurocommunist parties, notably in neighboring Spain.

This is probably due in part to sociological and cultural factors—such as the working class' revolutionary messianism. But as revolutionary achievements are undone and hunger returns to Alentejo, hopes for a better Portugal quickly fade, and the Portuguese seek their better world by emigrating to the Americas or the richer European countries. Policy-makers are counting on the traditional safety valve of emigration and family solidarity to carry Portugal's poor through the crunch of "restructuring" without social explosion.

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LABOR

By John Field

BARNSELEY, S. YORKSHIRE

3:30 A.M. FORTY-FIVE MINERS gather at Maltby Miners' Welfare Institute—"The Stute," in local dialect—to find out the target of the morning's picketing. Two hours later, four carloads of pickets return, having been stopped by the police on the Nottinghamshire borders and threatened with arrest. Eight cars have made it to Ollerton Colliery—a good ratio, since the Maltby men live just across the border in South Yorkshire and know all the minor roads.

10:00 a.m. The morning shift at Cresswell Colliery, Nottinghamshire, walks, tense and shame-faced, past 1,400 police. Behind the police, 800 pickets from Derbyshire and Yorkshire jeer. "If you use the word 'blackleg' [scab], you will be arrested," announces a policeman with a loudspeaker. "You are permitted to use the word 'bounder.'" Two local pickets are allowed to speak to the Cresswell men, half a dozen of whom turn back as the pickets cheer.

12:00 noon. Women in Barnsley Civic Hall, all volunteers, finish preparing food for strikers and their families. More than 600 people receive free meals here every day. "Some of the lasses can't get here because they don't even have the bus fare," says one organizer. The food has been donated by sympathizers: one Barnsley farmer has given a cow, another sends milk, pensioners bring cans of beans. But as the dispute continues, some families face starvation.

2:00 p.m. Strikers queue at Barnsley social-security offices to claim benefits for their families. The miners are entitled to nothing. "What do you receive in strike pay?" the clerks ask, though they know there is no strike pay. Each man loses 15 pounds a week from his family benefit because of this non-existent strike pay.

So it goes during a typical day for striking British coal miners. The Margaret Thatcher government, which successfully avoided a showdown with the coal miners in 1981, has provoked a fight. Meeting in Sheffield on April 19, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) called a full national stoppage.

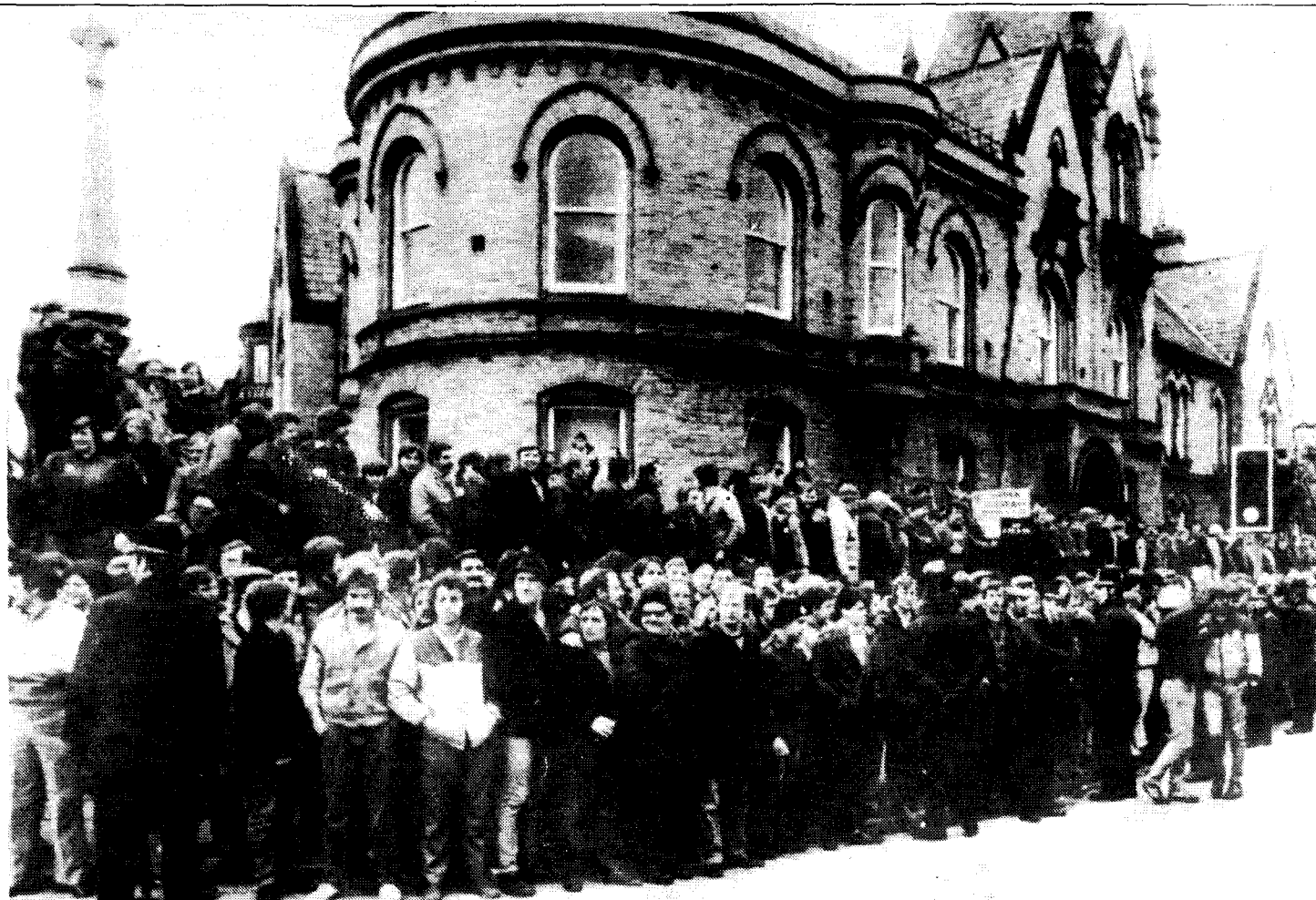
Most miners have now been out for more than 10 weeks. The effect on the striking coalfields is immediate and visible. Winding gear stands silent, empty coal trucks sit in railroad sidings, and bus shelters are plastered with yellow stickers urging passersby to fight pit closures. Most passersby wear stickers too.

The impact is equally obvious in the few coalfields where the strike lacks wide support. Hundreds of police guard every pit in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Lancashire. Police vans wait at every highway entrance and by major intersections for the incoming pickets from strikebound pits.

The issues at stake concern more than money. The strikers are protesting the National Coal Board's plan to shut 25 pits, with a loss of some 20,000 jobs. The Board has proposed generous severance terms, and strikers freely admit that they are losing considerable sums by their decision. But this dispute is about the defense of a whole way of life in Britain's mining communities.

Unemployment is already high in mining areas like South Wales and the Northeast. In South Yorkshire almost a quarter of the workforce is unemployed in the mining Dearne Valley. The miners suspect, with good reason, that the Board's demand for 20,000 fewer jobs is the tip of the iceberg. The industry has already lost 25,000 jobs since Thatcher came to power in 1979, and the National Union of Mineworkers has produced Coal Board memoranda showing a "hit list" of more than 60 pits scheduled for closure. The denials—from government and Coal Board—were as immediate as they were hollow.

The pit closure program was first announced in 1981. Faced with a solid vote



Yorkshire miners rally recently to resist court seizure of their assets.

British miners fight Thatcher's coal pit closures

for strike action, Thatcher retreated from the prospect of devastating strikes like the ones that shook and finally toppled the Conservative Heath government in 1972 and 1974. But since 1981 attitudes have hardened. Thatcher has a much larger majority, and she purchased for 1.5 million pounds the services of the American banker Ian MacGregor to carry out the same monetarist policies for the Coal Board that he has on British Steel.

Backs to the wall.

At 72, MacGregor might seem an unlikely challenger to the might of Britain's toughest and best-organized workforce. But he is a known admirer of American union busting. In the months before this strike a series of isolated disputes occurred provoked by sudden changes in management tactics and usually involving tighter underground discipline and the withdrawal of recognized union rights.

Management undoubtedly looked for the present dispute more than the union, which was singularly ill-prepared for a fight. For the Coal Board, the time was exactly right: coal consumption drops sharply in late spring, there are major stockpiles and (after a five-month overtime ban) the miners have little money in the bank. Also, the government is pressing MacGregor for quick results. In his first year as chairman, the Coal Board has lost more than 800 million pounds, and traditional markets for coal are disappearing as Britain's recession deepens.

In early March the Coal Board bypassed agreed-upon bargaining procedures and announced that Cortonwood Colliery in South Yorkshire would close in four weeks. Cortonwood's miners are moderates, but the pit lies in the heart of a militant coalfield, the base of national union President Arthur Scargill's power. The Cortonwood miners downed tools immediately and sent "flying pickets" to halt production throughout South Yorkshire.

Although rank-and-file miners backed the Cortonwood men, the Yorkshire area

leaders urged the men to return to work. But this time the Coal Board was not interested in negotiating a settlement. Far from wishing for conciliation, Ian MacGregor told the NUM executive that 25 more pits would close this year. The Yorkshire area leadership's moderation collapsed, and the Area Council, composed of working miners, overturned the full-time officers' advice. Yorkshire was out—officially. Unofficially, it had been out for days.

Response to the strike call was remarkably solid. In Maltby, where the Board plans massive investment and the future looks secure, 1,300 men voted unanimously to support it, though they had no immediate vested interest. In the following week solidarity strikes were declared in Scotland, Durham, South Wales and Kent, later joined by Derbyshire.

But those who hoped that the strike would be a repeat of 1972 and 1974 have been bitterly disappointed. Miners in several coalfields defeated the strike call. Lancashire, Staffordshire and, most vitally, Nottinghamshire (where only 7,285 voted for a strike and more than 20,000 against) continued working, at least until the NUM delegate conference voted for the national stoppage.

In Nottinghamshire, many miners are confident that their own pits have a secure future (a confidence that area union officials do not share). Perhaps more significant, unemployment in Nottinghamshire remains relatively low, whereas miners elsewhere can see the disastrous effects of mass unemployment all around them.

Traditional disunities remain important, however. Nottinghamshire has always been a moderate area, where rich seams of coal and harsh coal-face discipline have guaranteed high individual earnings. In 1926, after the general strike, the Notts Miners' president, George Spencer, led his men back to work while the other coalfields suffered a seven-month lockout. "Spencerism" (the term is still in currency) remains powerful today.

Nottinghamshire miners have always preferred bargaining at district rather than national level. They were furious in 1966 when the NUM agreed to a national day wage, severely cutting the traditionally high piecework earnings of Nottinghamshire, and they were the first to welcome the Coal Board's plans to reintroduce a productivity incentive scheme in 1978. But this time the independent attitude of the Notts men has undoubtedly weakened the rest of the union.

The NUM retains a highly federal structure. Each area has considerable autonomy over political matters, educational policy and other non-wage issues. In an industry so governed by diverse geological conditions, this federal structure makes sense, but it has institutionalized the Notts miners' independence from the rest of the NUM. While the development of national wages bargaining has brought the Notts leaders into line with the other areas, politically and industrially, it has scarcely affected the parochial and limited horizons of the rank-and-file collier.

The ease with which miners from Nottinghamshire and elsewhere have passed through police lines and crossed picket lines has shocked and embittered the strikers. Even the underground managers' association voted in favor of the strike, but Nottinghamshire union-branch officers supporting the strike have seen their houses vandalized and their families threatened. At least one branch commit-

People who had hoped the strike would repeat the intensity of those of 1972 and 1974 are now disappointed.

tee has resigned *en masse* to protest the behavior of its own members.

This bitter disunity within the NUM has enabled the Coal Board and government to place great pressure upon the strikers. Ian MacGregor has announced that he is prepared to starve the miners back to work—or so his aggressive speech to the Confederation of British Industries has been widely interpreted. Police activities in the coalfields, highly reminiscent of Jaruzelski's Poland, have reached a stage that, according to *The Guardian*

Continued on page 22

Banks

Continued from page 3

international agency to buy up these short-term loans and reissue them as long-term bonds. Banks, which had already charged high rates as compensation for risk, would be paid off at 80 cents to the dollar.

Almost any solution to the banking crisis requires banks or the taxpayers to pay the consequences. If the taxpayers do, it will not only be unfair, but it will also add to the bankers' sense that there are no real risks to them, that they can continue their mad chase without exercising responsibility. If the banks do, there is the risk of them cutting back drastically on all lending and raising rates. That would restrict economic recovery, and economic recovery offers the only prospect for repaying the bank loans. In some sense, the capitalist system "needs" a massive deflation that it cannot afford. Postponing a major bank crisis shifts the problems elsewhere.

"There's no simple way out of the instability of capitalism," Minsky said. "Peo-

ple say 'they' won't let another depression occur. Who's the 'they'? What makes you think 'they' have the competence not to let it happen? They can prevent 1929-33, but steps they take may get the economy on course to very large-scale inflation, and then we're back to 1929-33."

With the Continental crisis, he said, "a financial structure ready to go plop has not gone plop. If not for big government as a lender of last resort, we would have been well on our way to 1933." So much for free-market theory.

Despite the "inherent flaw" in the system, Minsky suggests that some changes would help: the Federal Reserve could require both more reserves and greater equity (which have declined in recent years), emphasize protection of depositors rather than stockholders and encourage small banks, which should be given at least the same protection offered the big banks.

Herman recommends limits on lending to any single country, greater capital requirements and some sort of insurance system that would link bank premiums to risk (now only a flat fee is paid to the FDIC). But that would not solve the problems.

"The thing is not reformable by little pieces," he insists. "Our reform is nationalization." Nationalization at least offers the prospect of treating banking as not just another business but rather as a mechanism for maintaining the health of the overall economy. Surprisingly, some mainstream bank analysts have also suggested that the solution may be turning banks into utilities or nationalizing them, even though they dislike the prospect.

But nobody sees the political or intellectual climate to support such a move. "We're just going to drift into a major crisis," Herman said.

There's no solution within "the current political configuration," said Moffitt, now an investment advisor with Shearson/American Express. "You'd have to have someone willing to take on the banks, like Roosevelt did, and make them write down loans, take the earnings hit [loss] and then see that the financial system adjusts to the needs of the real economy rather than the other way around."

Strike

Continued from page 6

wanted to vote on company mid-contract concession demands).

International union officers had suggested that the local consider staying in the plant and applying pressure from inside, waiting for a more propitious time with lower unemployment to strike if necessary. They knew what a long strike could do: at Indiana Desk strikers have been out for more than two years. A slowdown—very effective normally albeit illegal—would not have worked well for piece workers, but the union could have escalated grievances and other pressures. Yet workers were so angry—and unfamiliar with such a strategy—that they wanted to strike.

Most found both Spitler's demands and his treatment of their grievances intolerable. He wanted a maximum wage of \$6 in a plant where the average pay had been nearly \$8 before the unilateral cuts and a few workers had made up to \$13 an hour on piecework. He wanted a new incentive program for the half of the plant on piecework that would be set at a pace one-third above the nationally accepted norm (the equivalent of walking three miles an hour). He also wanted the right to revise rates continually and to

eliminate a system of calculating pay that would effectively reduce wages further. Holidays and vacations, as well as the basis for calculating vacation eligibility, would be cut. A new insurance plan would have effectively cost each worker roughly \$1 per hour instead of it being paid for completely by the company.

"He gave us a list of what he wanted to pay people," Hameister said. "And after three years they would be making less than they are now."

Spitler claimed R-Way needed the changes to be competitive, but he refused to provide financial information to the union. "R-Way admitted to us during negotiations that they were making a profit, but they wanted to make more," said Furniture Workers Local 800 business agent Harold Kober. "All we can find out about Spitler is that he's a union-buster. He said he never had a friend, didn't have any here and wouldn't when he left. He said he'd shut up three plants of the five he'd worked in because people hadn't gone along with him."

Originally the union had asked for modest pay increases, but since then it has made several different offers—an 18-month freeze, a new incentive system or a shift to all day rates (except for existing incentive workers, effectively instituting a lower-paid, "two-tier" system). The only new offer from R-Way has been a change in the insurance plan.

The union is ready to fight to the end, appealing for help from unions such as the Autoworkers and the Steelworkers, who represent other United Industrial Syndicate factories. "You've got to let Bemis and Richardson Brothers and others know they can't do this, too, or it will be a fight to the death," said International President Carl Scarbrough. "Spitler was sent in to bust the union. This was classic. But we're going after United Industrial Syndicate plant by plant and will destroy it. That old man in New York isn't going to make \$1 million a day off workers in Sheboygan."

Although the Kohler strikes show that local control does not guarantee empathy, R-Way strikers tend to see the problem as one of absentee ownership. "As long as we had local people at the head of it, we were all right," said union Vice-President Conway Reseburg, a 35-year veteran of R-Way. "They were sympathetic. If we have to go back, Spitler's got to go. There's no way to work with him. If they're going to shut it down, then shut it down."

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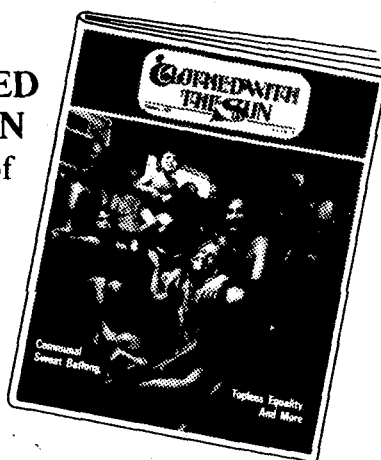


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By Chris Norton

SAN SALVADOR

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION was the real winner in the Salvadoran elections. CIA aid helped give the U.S. favorite, Napoleon Duarte, the margin over his ultra-rightist opponent, whose victory would have jeopardized continued U.S. aid to El Salvador.

Just days after Duarte's victory, the U.S. Congress approved more aid to El Salvador. The Reagan administration now has won more time to pursue its military solution.

The Salvadoran elite are the other winners in the elections even though they don't realize it yet. Duarte, who they despise for his populist rhetoric and for the mild reforms that slightly curbed their economic and political power, ultimately may be a better guarantor of their interests than their standard bearer, Roberto D'Aubuisson, whose ARENA supporters are angry about the secret U.S. support for Duarte. But more pragmatic parts of the private sector are adopting a wait-and-see attitude toward Duarte, who is scheduled to take office June 1.

The elections, while giving El Salvador enough of a democratic veneer to ensure the aid central to the Reagan administration's military strategy, failed to create a national consensus. The elections deepened the existing split between the reformist Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and the traditionalist elite represented by ARENA (National Republican Alliance). These splits mirror tensions within U.S. foreign policy between promotion of reforms aimed at removing the economic inequities leading to insurrection and support for the traditional economic and military elite who can guarantee stable anti-Communist regimes.

But just as national security has always taken precedence over reform in U.S. policy toward Latin America, in El Salvador the U.S. will likely backpedal further reforms and urge the Christian Democrats to make concessions to the right.

Those concessions could include ceding the private sector control over the government machinery that affects it, a currency devaluation favoring the agro-export sector, price guarantees for agricultural exports and assurances against further nationalizations and reforms.

But the private sector need not worry about further reforms—the issue is dead. Duarte stated on his way to the U.S. recently that the reforms already enacted would continue and would be "consolidated." But there would be no further reforms, he added.

The private sector, however, would like to go a step further and undo the reforms altogether, thereby allowing landlords to buy back their expropriated property as well as denationalizing the banks and returning the marketing of the country's agricultural exports to the private sector. Yet this is clearly not in the cards. The U.S. has forced a consensus now accepted by the military and even some of the private sector: the reforms must stay. Congressional support for continuation of aid to El Salvador is contingent on preserving the reforms.

Nonetheless, ARENA, representing the most recalcitrant agro-exporters, has controlled the Ministry of Agriculture and the Institute of Agrarian Reform (IS-TA) for the last two years and has seriously hurt the Phase 1 cooperatives by starving them of necessary credit.

Active support for these cooperatives, formed by the expropriation of large plantations, will be a central demand of the centrist, U.S.-linked labor coalition that made an election pact with the Christian Democrats. The Popular Democratic Unity is made up of four labor associations. The largest and most important are the peasants organizations—the Salvadoran Communal Union, with 100,000 members, and the Association of Agrarian Cooperatives. Both played important roles in Duarte's campaign.

The Salvadoran Communal Union sent 400 organizers door to door urging peasants to vote for Duarte. The Communal Union was set up by the American Institute for Free Labor Development in 1968

to lure support away from left-leaning peasant organizations. The Communal Union was also designed to create a militant mass base to demand reforms from the state, thus balancing the hardline sectors of the landed oligarchy who, in the view of the U.S. embassy, were contributing to the rise of the left by their unwillingness to concede even the most basic reforms. Although anti-Communist in ideology, the Communal Union has frequently drawn the wrath of the landowners, and over the years many of its organizers have been killed or intimidated.

With the Duarte victory, the Popular Democratic Unity would like to have a major influence in the government ministries that deal with their problems. The most sensitive appointment will be minister of agriculture, presently an ARENA appointee. The Ministry of Agriculture services the needs of the wealthy agro-

three main parties. The PCN will therefore retain control of the ministries of the presidency, justice, planning and public works. Although the conservative PCN opportunistically joined with the Christian Democrats in 1982 to block ARENA's domination of the Constituent Assembly, in the May 6 runoff election the PCN remained neutral under urging from the Christian Democrats and the U.S. embassy. This stance helped the Christian Democrats win.

Not surprisingly, the PCN—which many observers claim was the embassy's preferred choice—received a \$437,000 campaign subsidy from the CIA, while the Christian Democrats received \$960,000, according to the *New York Times*. The PCN plays a key role in U.S. strategy for El Salvador. The U.S. hopes the party can draw part of the conservative private sector into a centrist alliance with the Christian Democrats that would accept

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vate Enterprises and husband of one of the wealthiest women in the country. "This must be done in contrast to the climate that prevailed in 1980 and 1981" that was characterized, according to Maldonado, by "threats of nationalization, total disrespect for private property and policies conducive to a socialist type of society."

The private sector became a "scapegoat" for all the problems of the society, he said. Few point out that the private sector was responsible for the 5.5 percent rise in the gross domestic product enjoyed in the '70s, said Maldonado. "The private sector produced, and it paid taxes, built roads, ports, airports, hydroelectric facilities and dams."

El Salvador does have one of the best road systems in Central America and also has a better-than-average infrastructure. Yet while the country was undergoing a record growth boom, not all sectors of

EL SALVADOR

The ongoing reform problem



export sectors and also provides extension services to peasant small holders and the cooperatives formed on the large expropriated farms. Duarte will have to choose someone acceptable to both the private sector and the peasant organizations, which is a difficult task.

Duarte has promised the private sector there will be no further reforms.

Watching Duarte's cabinet appointments should give an indication of the direction of the new government. Although Duarte can be expected to appoint Christian Democrats as heads of most ministries, the actual change these appointments spark will likely be minimal.

The Christian Democrats have already promised the Party of National Conciliation (PCN), the conservative former official military party, that its personnel will not be removed from the ministries that the PCN has controlled since 1982, when the ministries were divided up among the

the U.S. agenda of moderate reform.

The PCN is also the key to outmaneuvering ARENA in the Constituent Assembly. With the backing of the five PCN deputies and two from the small Democratic Action Party (which has already made a pact with the Christian Democrats), the Christian Democrats would have a fragile one-vote margin in the Assembly.

But it's not likely that ARENA will graciously accept this margin. It hasn't taken its electoral defeat gracefully, and it remains to be seen whether a wave of vengeful ARENA-ordered death squad killings will follow. ARENA, which has recently controlled important ministries, including economy, agriculture, foreign trade, health and interior, will probably not retain control of these.

The Constituent Assembly and the executive branch of government may continue to be a tense battleground for ARENA and the Christian Democrats. The Christian Democratic Party, called the "Party of the Poor" by some supporters, will also be caught between its populist promises and the private sector's demands. "The new administration must create a climate of stability, trust, respect for private property and confidence in order to move to any kind of economic recovery," said Johnny Maldonado, president of the National Association of Pri-

society were sharing the rewards. As large entrepreneurs moved into the profitable cotton production, peasants were pushed off the land. The percentage of landless peasants rose from 11 percent in 1961 to 40 percent in 1975 and probably close to 60 percent by 1980. Those landless peasants and the urban working class—which lost 70 percent of its buying power in the past four years of frozen wages and inflation—have different interests from the private sector. The private sector, however, will probably come out ahead, predicts a political scientist here. "Duarte has to strengthen his right side, and he has to make a substantial concession."

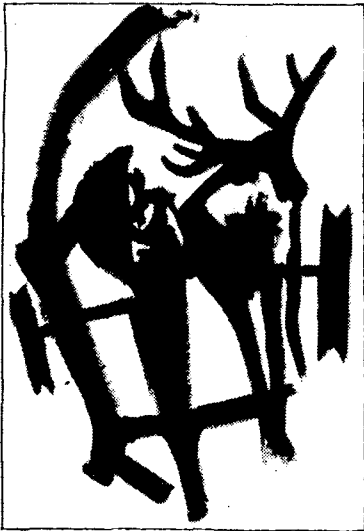
Duarte already faces a strike by cotton producers, who, for all their dislike of government intervention, are refusing to plant unless the government raises the guaranteed price. Cotton is the country's second largest export crop, and the loss of that income could prove disastrous.

Last year's small cotton harvest has already provoked another crisis: a scarcity of cotton seed oil. Most stores don't have any, and when it is available, oil sells at twice the government-controlled price.

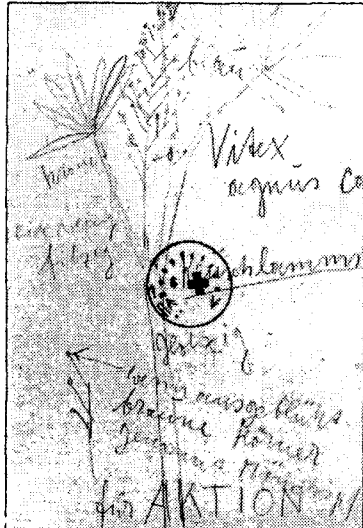
Duarte will also face pressures from both the agro-export sector and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) to devalue the colon by 60 percent.

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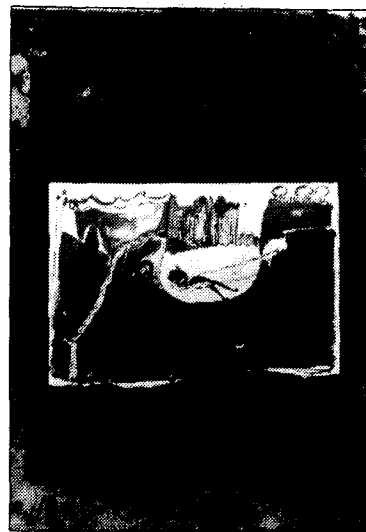
Stag Chariot
1974, oil.



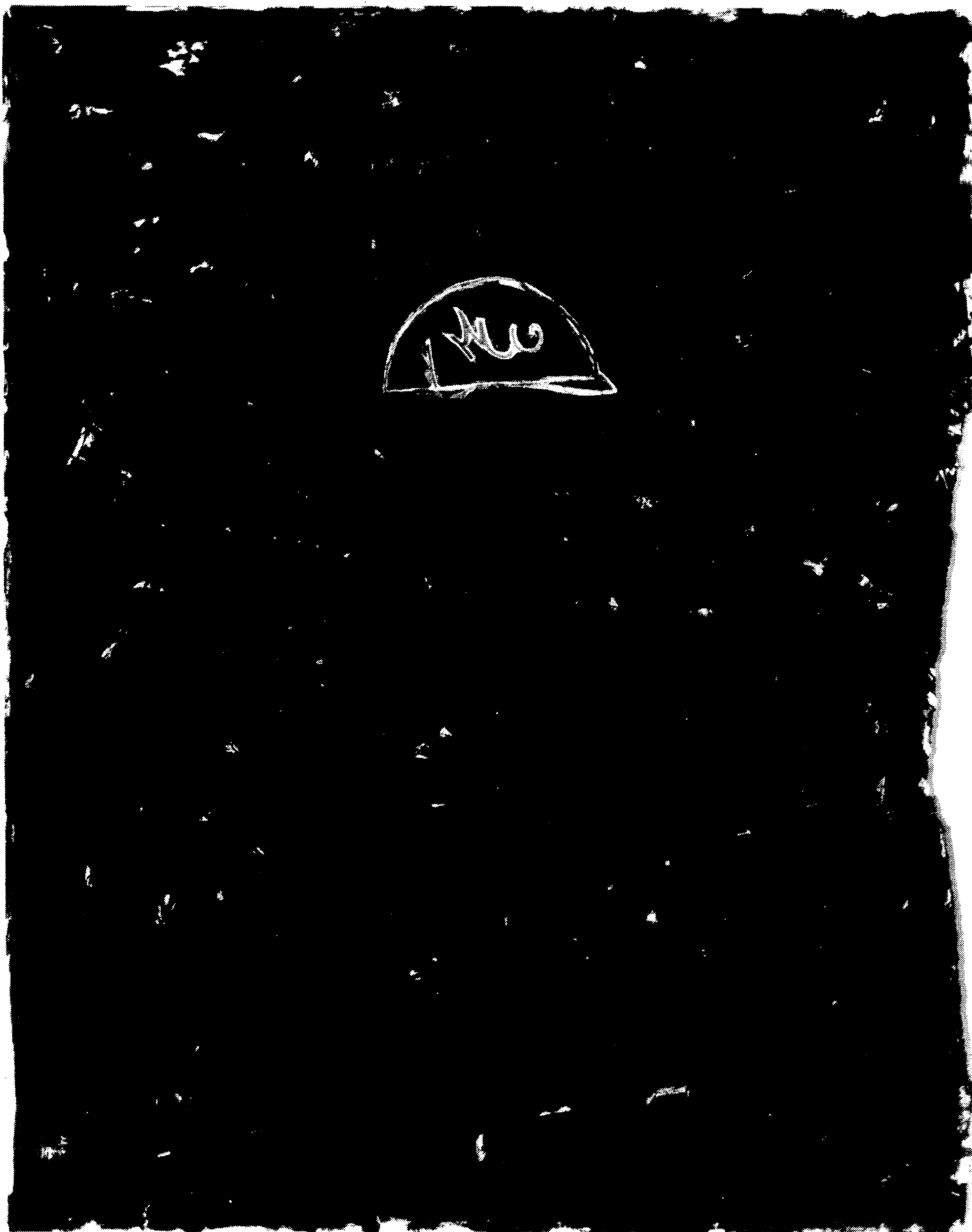
Vitex Agnus Castus
1972, pencil and rubber stamp.



Bermuda Triangle 04.00 Hours
1959, pencil, oil and collage.



Before Birth
1950, ink, watercolor, chemical
reactions and collage.



sha

Left, Jockey Cap on the Grass
1969, oil, watercolor and
gold paint.
Below, How to Explain Pictures
to a Dead Hare
1965, performance.



Joseph Beuys transforms substance into s

by KENNETH BAKER

Joseph Beuys, 1950



JOSEPH BEUYS, NOW 63, IS PROBABLY the most influential and infamous European artist of the postwar period. In his native Germany, he is revered as a sage and reviled as an anarchistic demagogue for having pushed the definition of art beyond the making of objects to the re-making of society. His 1979 retrospective show of sculpture at New York's Guggenheim Museum provoked a babel of opinion.

Whatever his authenticity as an artist, he has succeeded in unnerving a broad public at a time when most contemporary art stands no chance of shocking or even titillating its audience. Meanwhile, many of Germany's most acclaimed younger painters number among his former students, including Jorg Immendorf, Anselm Kiefer and Walter Dahn. Now, thanks to Harvard University's Busch-Reisinger Museum, we can take a long look at a generous survey of Beuys's drawings (through June 17). This will be the only appearance in America of a show organized and circulated in England by the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Beuys insists that his aim is to raise questions. And the first question most of his drawings raise is, how much do you have to know beyond what meets the eye? The second might be, how does what you know about something interact with what you see of it? But the first impression of the Busch-Reisinger show is almost surely one of bewildering diversity.

Those who know anything of Beuys may have heard that he uses art to mythicize his life. And indeed, his biography does much to illuminate his work. How much of that biography is his own invention is something hostile critics continue to question.

Beuys was born in 1921 in Kleve, near the German-Dutch border; his youth was spent there and in nearby Rindern, where his parents ran a fodder store. This rural area preserved a wealth of ancient customs and lore. As a child, Beuys was fascinated by the local landscape and wildlife. He collected and classified all kinds of biological specimens. He is said to have learned casting from the local blacksmith and to have frequented the studio of a local sculptor, Achilles Moortgat. At one point he even ran away with a traveling circus, where he developed passable skills as a stuntman and escape artist.

After the Nazis rose to power, he attended book burnings in order to cadge some of the condemned literature for his own library. He enrolled in a premedical course with the hope of becoming a pediatrician. Ultimately, though, he was pressed into the Luftwaffe, first as a radio operator, later as a dive-bomber pilot. In 1943, he sustained a series of major injuries that culminated in a decoration for bravery and in a legendary experience. He was shot down on the Crimea, where he was rescued by nomadic Tartar tribesmen. To keep him from freezing to death and to promote the healing of his wounds, they wrapped his body in layers of fat and felt, an event he went on to commemorate repeatedly in sculptures and in performance art.

After the war, Beuys decided that art might be a less constricting career than science, and so he entered the Dusseldorf academy of art, where he would later become a popular and controversial teacher, only to find that the academic art curriculum was scarcely less hidebound than that of the sciences had been. However, he found a mentor in Ewald Matare, a sculptor of mystical beliefs who had been banished by the Nazis as a "degenerate" artist. He completed a commission for Matare, and in the '50s he himself received and executed several sculptural commissions for private patrons.

But the mid-'50s were a time of psychological crisis for Beuys. He spent several years severely depressed, occupying himself by working on the farm of some friends. All the while, the story goes, he was brooding about the wounded condition of humanity. Gradually, he evolved

his notion of the artist as alchemist and magician, who would redress the spiritual imbalance of a culture overdosed with rationality and mechanistic thinking. His drawings are the diaries of a self-proclaimed shaman whose aim "is the transformation of substance." "If creativity relates to the transformation and development of substance," he says, "then it can be applied to everything in the world and is no longer restricted to art."

Many of his drawings are the first rehearsal of ideas for sculpture, though he never translates an idea from one medium to another without transmuting it. A good example of his sculpture is the *Fat Chair*, from 1964. Here he took an ordinary wooden chair and heaped it with fat, forming the latter into a mass that slopes gently from the back of the chair to the front edge of the seat. The chair is a kind of surrogate human figure—perhaps a human skeleton. The fat is all too like flesh, or the warm, organ-crowded midsection of the body. The conjunction of structured and structureless material, of the chair's right angles with the plasticity of the fat, is typical of the perceptual tensions Beuys injects into his sculptures.

The *Fat Chair* is meant to provide an immediate physical metaphor for all the dualities that pervade human existence, from flesh and bone to male and female to life and death. Beuys never shrinks from invoking the largest, most universal themes. And yet we may well wonder just what makes his works denser with meaning than those of artists like the Arte Povera group in Italy, who also give a strong emphasis to materials and processes.

The drawings raise the same question. Without the catalogue essay, would you guess that the hare, the stag and the swan, which appear so often in Beuys's drawings, are symbols of the shaman, thus of the artist himself and (as he would have it) the artist in everyone? Even if you did, you couldn't know that the animals in *Shepherds Talking* and *Stagleader's Cart* have an autobiographical significance for Beuys. Yet it's his linking of these figures as personal symbols with their larger meaning in myth and folklore that is said to give his art its special encompassing vision.

His reenchantment of common objects, substances and activities with symbol and metaphor depends upon the lore he has been able to propagate about his own powers as an artist. People see complicated symbolic meanings in Beuys's works because they have got word that his works are profound in ways most other artists' are not.

Beuys himself emphasizes that there is no hard and fast interpretation of anything he does, that his aim is merely to activate the processes of nonlogical thought. To this end he has made himself a public figure, especially in Europe. He has given performances (which he calls "actions") in many parts of the world and he's turned his position at the Dusseldorf academy of art into a base of operations for radical political organizing. (He is one of the founders of the ecological Green Party in West Germany.) His lectures are hugely popular for the way they range freely; the blackboards on which he chalks diagrams of his spiraling lecture themes are preserved and prized as drawings.

But what is the difference between a "shaman" and a celebrity? For many years, Beuys has never appeared in public without a felt trilby hat, which serves as a symbol of his artist/shaman role and a reminder of his resurrection from his war injuries. No exhibition of his work seems to take place without being accompanied by a photograph of the artist, for Beuys has an unforgettable face, rawboned and haggard, with a moist, unflinching gaze that undoes the mediation of the camera. Perhaps he has become a shaman.

What about the drawings, then? How much does the fascination of these works owe to the media legend? Beuys is the Andy Warhol of international minimalism. Like Warhol, he senses that in a

spectacular society such as ours, in which people look to mass media for images of how to live, we're never sure how much we've been swayed by the consensus that's always implicit in stardom.

What makes Beuys a more interesting figure than Warhol is the greater commitment he demands of those who see his work as art. Warhol assimilates his art to its media sources: materials and techniques don't matter because he traffics in images of the famous. Beuys, though no less attentive to his own public persona, assimilates his art to raw materials, doodles and messes. He claims to believe that "everyone is an artist" (how Warholian that sounds), and he calls upon the artist in everyone to the extent that appreciating his work as art demands visual decisions on the viewer's part.

In the drawings, as elsewhere in his work, Beuys constantly skirts visual, philosophical and political incoherence. He uses a variety of materials and techniques that defies any definition of "drawing," so we can experience our own decision to regard his work as art as part of what makes it art. Much of what he puts forward as "drawing" looks so little like art that we feel we are pitting the authority of our personal perception against the authority of the institutions that have branded everything Beuys does as important. This intimate confrontation takes place in much contemporary art, but he has contrived to make us conscious of it. Juggling the symbolic, semiotic and biographical ambiguities of the work is a language game you play only after you decide to take Beuys seriously.

In the tradition of Marcel Duchamp, whose silence—or abstinence from art—Beuys says is overrated, he is an all-around good promoter of his own legend. But he is a true magician when it comes to transfiguring meaningless materials into objects of pure fascination. His drawing techniques can be so crude as to seem little more than ways of ruining paper. No matter that you cannot decode the arcane symbolism and narrative of the 12-page drawing *The Cable* (1970). To the eye, exploring it is great adventure.

It is possible to find echoes of other modern artists in Beuys's drawings—Klee, Schiele, Beckmann and Rodin, for instance—but no such footnotes are needed. To look at *The Cave* (1972) or *Shaman* (1965) is to be convinced of Beuys's mastery of line. If his drawing seems always on the verge of going out of control, that makes it more exciting: he is still a stuntman on paper.

No formal analysis will render Beuys's drawings more convincing than a good close look does. And the brave musings on symbolism in the exhibit's catalogue essay suggest that no discursive analysis will do the job either. Beuys's art licenses anti-formalist discourse, but that kind of interpretation always sounds twisted and notional unless it comes from the artist himself. Part of the success of Beuys's drawings (and sculpture) is the way he frustrates interpretation. He has distilled the magical quality of visual art, its irreducible power to attract and hold our attention.

The source of this power is finally a mystery. Is it his materials, his disposition of them, his mingling of matter and allusion? We cannot say. We can only marvel that Beuys seems to have a magic touch when it comes to synthesizing stuff and actions into the loose unity we call a "drawing." In some cases, such as *Trance in the House of the Shaman* (1961), it matters that a drawing is about something; in others, such as *Electricity* (1959), it doesn't.

Praise seems beside the point in talking about works as inscrutable and compelling as Beuys's. This survey of his drawings, however, is one of the most provocative, difficult and satisfying exhibitions of visual art to appear in the U.S. in years. The praise must go to the Busch-Reisinger Museum for making Beuys's drawings available in such quantity. ■

A version of this article first appeared in the *Boston Phoenix*.

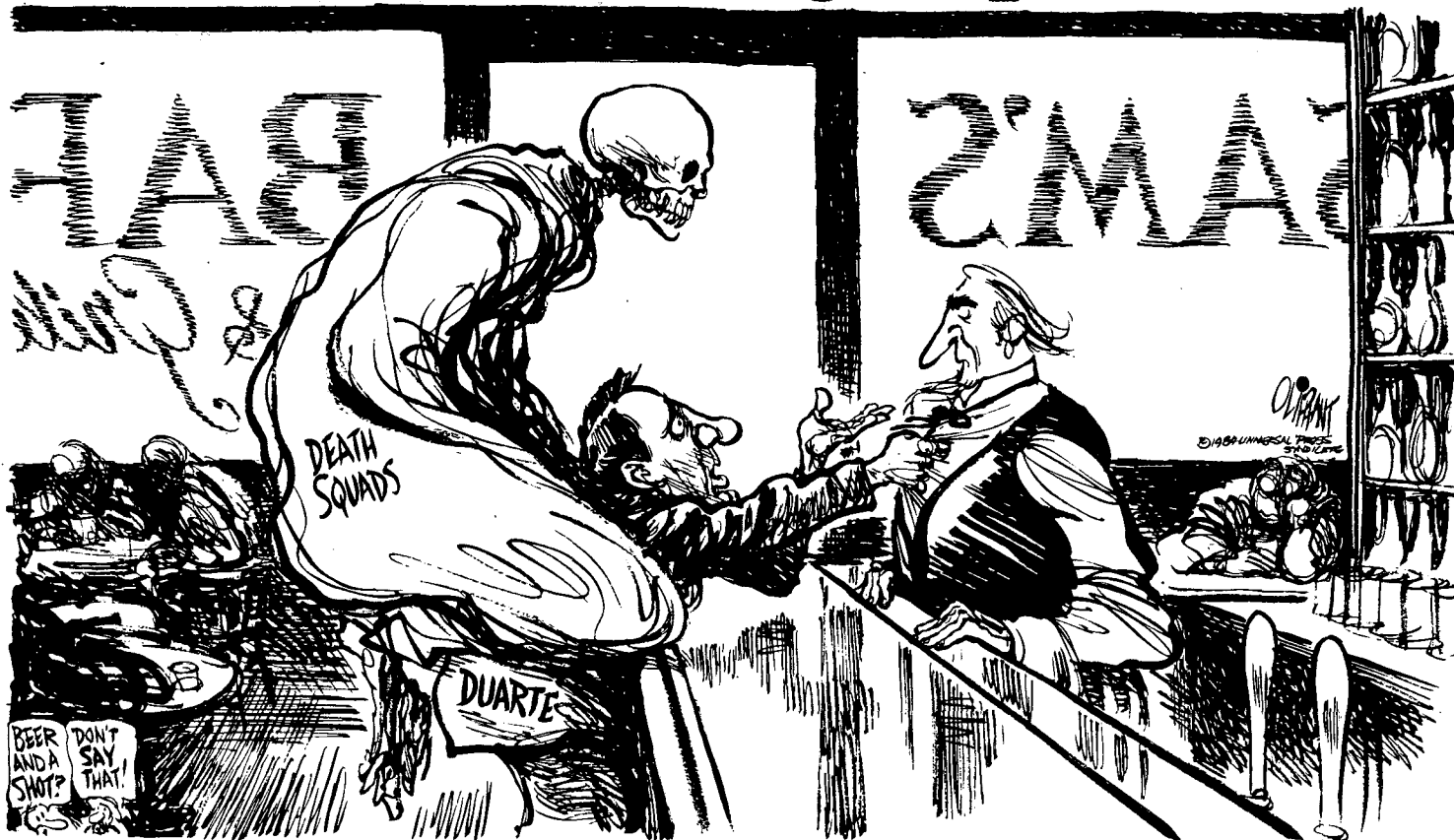
All photographs courtesy Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London, except *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* © Ute Klopheus.



irit.

EDITORIAL

Liberal voices in Congress fail to challenge Reagan premise



'C'MON, SAM, I PROMISE I'VE ALMOST GOT THE PROBLEM LICKED — JUST GIMME ONE MORE LITTLE DRINK TO KEEP ME GOING WHILE I FINISH HIM OFF!'

"We will not sacrifice our independence or equality among nations," President-elect Jose Napoleon Duarte of El Salvador said last week as he was lobbying Congress to approve military aid for his regime without any strings attached. It was all according to script and, despite a growing resistance among liberal Democrats, it was working.

But despite Duarte's democratic protestations—he avowed the principle that "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile; everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public

hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal"—nothing has changed.

Duarte will almost certainly get his money—that's what the CIA elected him for. But the death squads are now widely recognized as part of the army, and the army still controls El Salvador. When Duarte arrived in this country, the *New York Times* reported that, while he promised to try to "introduce democracy and abolish the death squads," he was "also careful to avoid any controversy with the Salvador military leadership."

And Duarte confirmed this judgment by announcing that he had decided to ask Gen. Carlos Eugenio Vides Cassanova to remain as defense minister. When confronted by Rep. Mary Rose Oaker (D-OH) with a U.S. government report that said Cassanova had condoned or participated in a cover-up in the killings of the church women, Duarte said that was "not fair." The general, he said earlier, had agreed to make "a declaration of loyalty and support for democracy"—just as he himself was doing.

Despite the show put on for congressmembers by Duarte under President Reagan's direction, the death squads and the question of elections and democracy in El Salvador are not the real issue. In fact, the underlying issue has not been posed by the congressional Democrats most visibly leading the opposition to increased military aid to El Salvador. President Reagan reiterated his premise at a press conference the same day Duarte was lobbying Congress. Saying that the "freedom fighters" of Nicaragua, Nicaragua's "threatened neighbors" and also the "enemies of freedom" were watching, Reagan once again insisted that "security assistance is essential to help all those who must protect themselves against the expanding export of subversion by the Soviet bloc, Cuba and Nicaragua."

If any liberal voices in Congress opposed this view of the world, their voices were not heard last week—and this despite the fact that only the week before the House had given Miguel de la Madrid, Mexico's conservative president, a standing ovation when he directly challenged Reagan's premise. Saying that Mexico rejects "without exception all military plans that would endanger the security and development of the region," de la Madrid insisted that the Central American conflict is "the result of economic deficiencies, political backwardness and social injustices," not Soviet or Cuban intervention.

"We cannot accept [the region's] becoming part of the East-West confrontation," he said, "nor can we accept reforms and structural changes being viewed as a threat to the security of the other countries of the hemisphere."

And, of course, de la Madrid is correct in his facts and right in his principles. The Sandinista government of Nicaragua represents the will of the majority of Nicaraguan people, however imperfect it may be. And the Salvadoran civil war represents the hatred of the army and the government by the people of El Salvador, however imperfect the rebels may be. Had it not been for massive American intervention there, they would have toppled the government long ago.

In Chicago, a Fine new conflict

There are those on the left who believe that Ronald Reagan's revival of the Cold War has been accompanied by a new wave of McCarthyism—and that therefore socialists and "progressives" should not look critically at their predecessors in the New Left of the '60s or the Communist-led left of the '30s and '40s. The line goes that it is a disservice to the left to probe too deeply. Criticism of the left might be used by our enemies to further the Cold War hysteria.

There might be something to that argument, if McCarthyism still worked. But, as we have observed in these pages from time to time over the past seven years, McCarthyism just doesn't have appeal anymore. Three weeks ago, in Chicago—the former home of the Daley machine and the scene of the 1968 Democratic convention riots—this was brought home strikingly after Mayor Harold Washington appointed Fred Fine commissioner of the proposed Department of Cultural Affairs. Fine had a lengthy history of arts activities. He served on the Illinois Arts Council and on the Chicago Council of Fine Arts, and six years ago he founded the highly successful arts and entertainment department at Chicago's Columbia College.

But in his youth, and until 1958, Fine was a leader of the Communist Party. And in 1956, after having been underground for four years, he surrendered to federal authorities to be tried and convicted under the Smith Act for conspiring to advocate the overthrow of the United States government. Two years later, when

his conviction was overturned by the U.S. Court of Appeals, Fine quit the party.

As fate would have it, Fine's nomination came up for confirmation before the Chicago City Council's Cultural Development and Historical Landmarks Committee chaired by Alderman Gerald M. McLaughlin. McLaughlin is one of the anti-Washington majority of 29 on the Council. He is also on leave from the police department and is thought to be a former member of the now-disbanded Red Squad.

As one might expect, McLaughlin quickly got wind of Fine's background and proceeded to do his best to make the most of it. "To be a member of a certain political party is one thing," McLaughlin said, but "to advocate the violent overthrow of the government is another." Fine's political background "will play a definite role as to whether he is approved," McLaughlin added. "It will be one of the first things we ask him about."

But if McLaughlin and others among the Vrdolyak 29 thought that this was yet another way to embarrass Mayor Washington, they were quickly disabused of the idea. The *Chicago Tribune* headlined its page-one story: "McCarthyism lives in council debate." The next day, Washington reiterated his support of Fine. Saying he had been fully aware of his political past before appointing Fine, Washington added he had "presented his name wholeheartedly. Still do. First-rate individual, best of breed. We looked all over the country. Couldn't match him."

And that Sunday, the *Tribune* ran an



editorial saying that Fine would, indeed, have to answer questions about his past, but that "there is little doubt that he'll answer satisfactorily." Presumably, the editorial continued, "like most of us he's outgrown a lot of juvenile ideas." But the *Tribune* had considerable doubt that Washington's foes would settle for that, because "this is sure-fire box office."

As it turned out, the *Tribune's* fears were ill-founded. Fine issued a statement admitting his former party membership, and added that his record "in the business and academic world and the arts establishes beyond any doubt my devotion to the American democratic system." The only public outrage was not against Fine, but against McLaughlin for exploiting Fine's political past. The arts community rallied to Fine's support, and, as the *Tribune* noted, "City Hall observers" believed that a replay of the House Committee on Un-American Activities in the Chicago City Council would only help "solidify Washington's support among white, lakefront liberals."

McLaughlin quickly got the message and backed off. Fine's statement, he said, "was what we wanted to hear," adding that "we simply wanted him to confirm or deny the reports and explain his position." And a week later, in a highly unusual move for this City Council, the Finance Committee voted 15-1 to approve an ordinance establishing the Department of Cultural Affairs that Washington wanted. It was one of few innovative things Washington has gotten through a Council committee.

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

IGNORANCE OF HISTORY?

THE MAJORITY OF VOTERS FERVENTLY wish to shed differences and unite in order to defeat Reaganism in November. This common bond can help us succeed if it has a strong conceptual base.

Reaganism is a pseudo-religious form of modern fascism. In no way can its philosophy, methods or goals represent "patriotic Americanism." The horrors Reaganism has in store for the world have only just begun. Unfortunately, ignorance of history makes opposition to Reaganism a largely unwitting anti-fascism, ergo, uncertain in November.

—Roy Kuwahara
Willingboro, N.J.

SLIP OF A MIND

THE MAY 16 ISSUE CARRIED A PROVOCATIVE article on anti-Semitism in the black community, but unless Salim Muwakkil is a.k.a. Milton Coleman, its closing reference to Jesse Jackson's use of the term "Hymie" was totally unjust and nasty. Equating Jackson's thoughtless slip in a private conversation with the worst excesses of fundamentalist and nationalist fanatics is the kind of journalism worthy of *People* magazine or *Readers Digest*.

In case Salim and the *ITT* editors have been napping since that remark was made in *January*, they should know that Jackson apologized and was forgiven by many progressive Jews—among them, Barry Commoner—and he then moved on to successful campaigns in places like New York, Washington, D.C., and Mississippi, among others. It is not only the wretchedly bigotted major media who try to keep Jackson on the defensive over that foolish utterance, but the morally righteous and unforgiving leftists who have grown so used to being irrelevant and losing that the potential for a giant step forward leaves them terrified. While

Salim's use of the remark to open his article was understandable, his vicious repeat at the end warrants an apology.

Jackson has courageously put his life on the line in order to bring issues usually discussed in living rooms or among academics to millions of Americans, the legendary masses previously known to progressives only in the abstract or through psychedelic haze. The sometimes rotten treatment his tragically disorganized and underfunded campaign has received from "progressives" says more about our problems in this country than any stupid slip-of-the-mind committed by Jackson.

—Frank Scott
San Rafael, Calif.

RESENTFUL CHILDREN?

I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH MOST OF Salim Muwakkil's assessment of black anti-Semitism (*ITT*, May 16), but I think he misses a deeper dimension to the problem.

Muwakkil overlooks the deep strain of hatred against Jews as the people who were the longest friends of blacks. It is the hatred that sometimes characterizes a son's or daughter's relationship to parents, i.e., I don't need you anymore, I don't want you telling me what's good for me, get off my back.

Through the '30s, '40s, '50s and especially the '60s, Jews were often patronizing toward blacks. It was their money that fueled the equal rights struggles; they were often their lawyers, doctors or organizers. In the late '60s some black leaders finally said, "We don't need you anymore."

About that time, Martin Luther King was killed and the cities went up in smoke. The civil rights movement died a terrible death. Many of those responsible for the purge were feeling guilty about it; it helped kill the movement. But facing guilt, admitting it, is never easy: it is easier to turn it around and blame the victim. And from these early

acts—by Harold Cruse, Stokely Carmichael, LeRoi Jones and others—has come down to the young people of today—the intellectuals and the street people—an inheritance of anti-Semitism, propagated by demagogues like Jesse Jackson, an anti-Semitism created not, I suggest, by Jewish merchants, many of whom are fondly recalled by blacks, but by the blacks' resentment (against the Jews) for having had to be, like children, the beneficiaries of Jewish liberalism and generosity in a world where most whites shunned and mistreated blacks.

—Florence H. Levinsohn
Chicago

HAVE A HART

PROPOS OPEN PRIMARIES, WHAT A party wheelhorses like Fred Gram regard as Republicans "fouling the Democratic primary," (*ITT*, May 16) I view as an opportunity for independents and Republicans to voice their sentiments and preference on who is to occupy the White House in the next four critical years.

Demographic changes notwithstanding, the country still votes roughly one-third Democratic, one-third Republican and one-third independent; and it's garnering the independent third that decides the outcome.

That is why Democrats, liberals and progressives, working people truly seeking to oust Reagan should be pulling for Gary Hart who has demonstrated widespread support among independents and young voters of both parties.

It's either a rerun of 1968 or 1980 with Mondale (whose mentor Hubert Humphrey was a Vietnam hawk and a loser to boot) or a fighting chance with a fresh voice with new ideas like Gary Hart, who is beholden to the fat cats, party establishment types, political action committees and executive councils that make endorsements for president before primaries and convention without even canvassing the rank and file.

—Irving Gold
Jupiter, Fla.

ONE MAN'S FASCIST

OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS, *IN THESE Times* has published several articles as background on the remaining three Democratic candidates. From these, I perceive a fondness for Sen. Gary Hart. It seems that all of you are conveniently overlooking two facts: one, Sen. Hart attended (did he graduate?) divinity school; and two, he is a member of the Nazarene Church.

I've no idea how many readers understand those two points. As a young teenager I was forced to attend a Nazarene church. Jerry Falwell loves them. As a gay activist, I can authoritatively advise you that the Nazarene Church is against civil rights, minority rights and women's rights. When has Sen. Hart repudiated those views? Has the leopard changed his spots?

Hart attacks Mondale's Chrysler "bailout" and his advocates point to job losses. If there had been no bailout, all of the jobs at Chrysler plus many support industries would have been lost. Better half the pie than none at all.

Rev. Jesse Jackson rarely receives positive notice. All the media have pounced on him for the "Hymietown" remark. Let me advise you that he did not offend upstate New Yorkers who regard NYC as Rip-off (syn. "Jew" or "Hymie") City. He's the only remaining candidate with a sensible defense (cut it) and foreign policy. We've been giving the store away to Israel, the new fascists.

The columns have remarked that Hart's yuppies will not vote for Mondale. Fine, then let them suffer another four years of Reagan. We want permanent liberals, not fairweather friends who sip Perrier and eat yogurt and wouldn't hit the streets on a bet. Yuppies are made of plastic and polyester. Yuppies? More like "yukkies."

In essence, there is no real difference between Sen. Hart and Ronald Reagan, except party label. New ideas? Where are they? In the fundamentalist Nazarene Church?

—Vernon F. Hall
Richmondville, N.Y.

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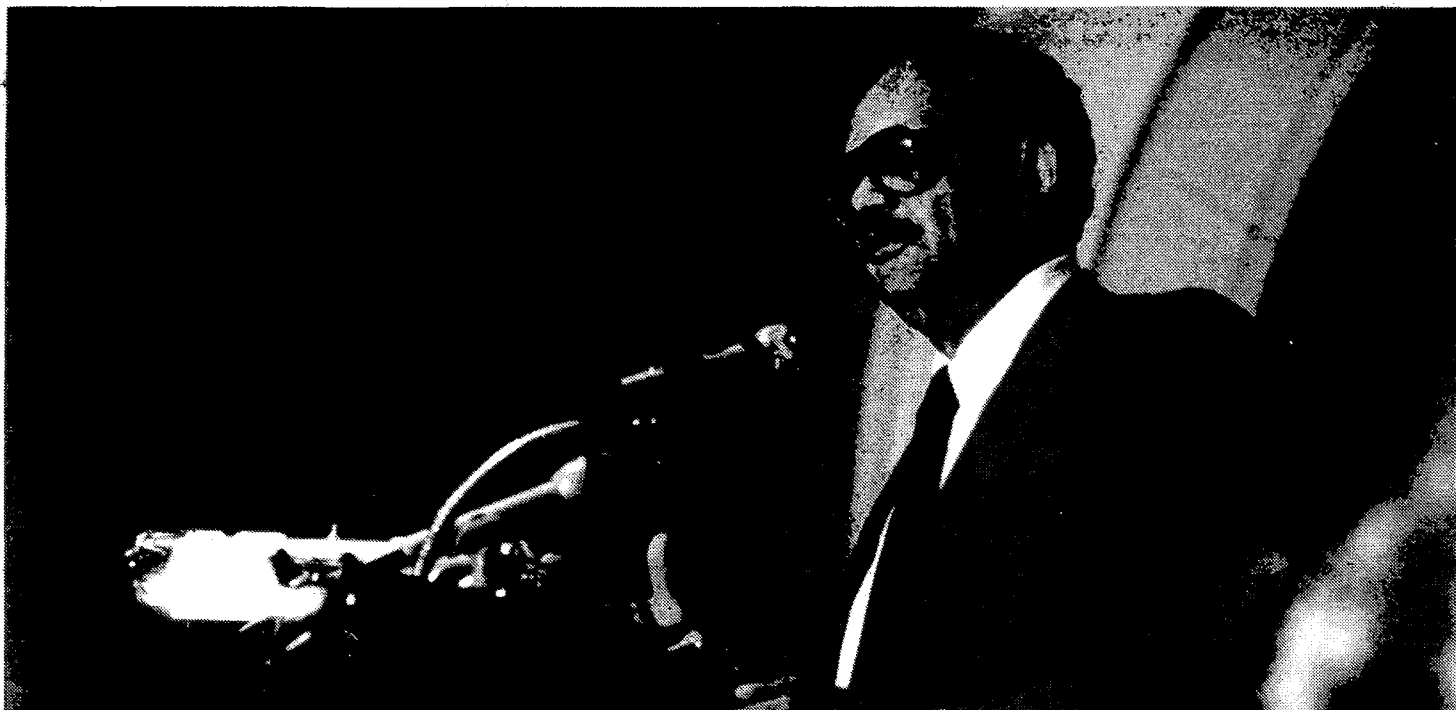
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PERSPECTIVES

Black journalists rate Farrakhan factor

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES columnist Vernon Jarrett says black journalists have a duty to report on the black experience, warts and all.

By Salim Muwakkil

"MILTON COLEMAN is a Judas weak-kneed coward Uncle Tom," reads a button being hawked by members of the Nation of Islam (NOI). Coleman is the black *Washington Post* reporter who disclosed Jesse Jackson's "Hymie" gaffe, and who, because of that, was singled out for ostracism by NOI leader Louis Farrakhan. "I'm going to stay on his case until we make him a fit example to the rest of them [black journalists]," Farrakhan said in a nationally broadcast radio address. In that same broadcast Farrakhan also gave his position on black journalists in general. "Don't tell me nothing about you're a reporter," the Black Muslim leader said. "You're just a nigger in the eyes of white people.... You are just a pure chump operative of those that write your stories for you to put it under your byline. If it's too good for black people or too good for your own people, they don't want that kind of story out of you."

The anti-Coleman button is reportedly a big seller in black communities across the country, and Farrakhan's general criticism of black journalists has found a receptive ear among many who believe that black journalists should be advocates, even propagandists, for the cause of black liberation.

But what do black journalists think about all of this? "I find opinion to be very divided on many levels and it all depends on who you talk to," says Mervin Aubespin, president of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) and a veteran reporter for the Louisville *Courier-Journal*. For the past few weeks Aubespin has been on the road attending forums and symposiums sparked by the Coleman controversy. Recently in Chicago he addressed the Region Six (Midwest) Conference of the NABJ on the issue.

"You just can't tie the response of black journalists about this specific issue into a neat package," Aubespin told *In These Times*. "Many question the ethics of Milton revealing off-the-record remarks. But some black journalists applauded him for holding Jesse accountable for his intemperate remarks. They argue that anyone seeking the highest office in the land—especially one who is running on a 'rainbow coalition' base—has a responsibility to discipline his public and private behavior. And if he doesn't, that's news. Then there are those who soundly condemn Milton for gratuitously

providing Jesse's critics with ammunition. My own opinion is that Jesse shouldn't have said it, Milton shouldn't have revealed it and Farrakhan should have stayed completely out of it."

Aubespin took strong exception to Farrakhan's depiction of black journalists as "chump operatives" who let their bylines appear on stories written by their white editors. "Farrakhan's criticism is absolutely ludicrous. He has no idea how a major newspaper works. He's just trying to intimidate us and this black reporter just won't let that happen. Everyone from redneck sheriffs to Ku Klux Klan henchmen have tried in the past to intimidate me. I didn't let it happen then and I won't be intimidated now by someone who has the audacity to suggest that I'm a traitor to the cause. Who the hell is he to tell me what the cause is? I'm strongly supportive of Jackson's campaign, but that doesn't mean that as a black reporter I have to alter my responsibility to report a story fairly and accurately. We're not in the public relations business and in my opinion we do a big disservice to the black community by covering up the warts."

Divergent views.

The NABJ forum, which focused on the problems peculiar to blacks covering blacks, offered evidence that black journalists' opinions on this issue span the spectrum. In addition to Aubespin, the forum panelists included Jay Harris, a columnist for the Gannet News Service, Vernon Jarrett, columnist for the Chicago *Sun-Times* and television commentator, and Charles Sanders, managing editor of *Ebony* magazine.

Sanders said that *Ebony* was frankly in the business of celebrating black achievement and had little interest in tarnishing the image of any black achiever. "We have so few black heroes as it is, we refuse to write anything that may disparage our heroes or damage their reputation."

Harris said the controversy was "greatly overblown" and that Coleman's action was simply a "violation of trust. There are clear rules on whether to violate a professional trust and Coleman violated those rules plain and simple." Harris said he's troubled by the "selective nature of the coverage" Jackson's campaign is receiving in the *Washington Post* and he said Coleman's revelation fit a bit too perfectly into the general mold the paper had already established. "To give the impression that Jesse is an anti-Semite is to give an unfair impression," he said.

Vernon Jarrett, a journalist with a long record of involvement in movement politics, argued that black journalists have a responsibility to the black community

and not to specific black leaders. "There are other sides of the black experience that go way beyond the ups and downs of individual leaders. We have a duty to that community to report what we know, flaws and all. When people charge me with washing our dirty linen in public, I simply ask them if they would prefer another laundry to do it." Jarrett recalls a discussion he had with a certain West German reporter who had neglected to reveal various quirks in the character of the Rev. Jim Jones of Peoples' Temple fame. "If he had done his job, a lot of lives may have been saved."

In an earlier column addressing this issue, Jarrett, who, it must be noted, is a long-time critic of the Rev. Jackson, wrote, "If Coleman had revealed an off-the-record, off-color racial remark by Walter F. Mondale or Sen. Gary Hart, Coleman would be defended and praised by the same people who now attack him."

"Black journalists are caught right in the middle of this controversy," Aubespin noted in his forum remarks. "While some blacks accuse us of too much objectivity, many white editors accuse us of too little. A lot of editors started pulling black reporters off the Jackson campaign after this thing broke. They wanted to know why more of us hadn't reported Jackson's tendency to use such intemperate language. The real shame of this whole episode is that just when black reporters were getting a much needed opportunity to gain experience in covering a national political campaign, this Farrakhan foolishness happens. When an editor catches wind that all you're going to do is report the positive news, they'll quickly get you out of the way. That man [Farrakhan] has hurt the progress we've fought so long to achieve."

Aubespin said this controversy has also served to obscure candidate Jackson's positions on important issues. "I think what happened is that Farrakhan was launched into national prominence at the expense of Jackson's campaign."

Accountability is an issue.

But there are those black journalists who believe Farrakhan has a point in holding them accountable for what they write. "We demand accountability from black politicians, business people and entertainers, so we must do the same with black journalists," explained Lu Palmer, a radio commentator, columnist and leader of Chicago Black United Communities (CBUC). "In fact, because a journalist has the awesome powers of words at his disposal, it may be even more important to demand accountability from them. If we don't, then all they

have to guide them is the racist perspective of their white editors. And, believe me, I know that perspective well from my days at the *Chicago Daily News*. Palmer quit that Chicago daily in 1973 because of what he charged was racist coverage of the black community.

"I have ambivalent feelings about all of this, to tell you the truth," said Monroe Anderson, one of two black columnists writing for the *Chicago Tribune*. "Black journalists do have a special responsibility to the black community, and some of us do have to be occasionally reminded of that responsibility. White journalists understand that they have a responsibility to their community and they take care of it very well. However, they expect black journalists to assume the same responsibility without recognizing, at times, that we have different perspectives on certain things."

"On the other hand," Anderson added, "I don't like intimidation. Now, Minister Farrakhan may have been speaking allegorically when he threatened Coleman but remember, Farrakhan made similar threatening statements about Malcolm [X] right before he was assassinated."

Following his forum remarks, Jay Harris told *In These Times* he thought Farrakhan's threats were harmless, rhetorical attempts to let black reporters know that they were being judged by criteria other than that of their white editors. "Too much has been made of his statements," he said. "Whether we like Farrakhan or not, we have to acknowledge that he's a black leader respected by many. As far as Coleman's action, well, I'll simply say this: a lot of black reporters have heard Jesse use some pretty strange language, but only one chose to report it."

Les Payne, a *Newsday* columnist, agreed with Harris. "Milton trashed his source over something that was quite insignificant in the general scale of things. He knows that Jesse's not an anti-Semite and that Hymie remark was just a stylistic quirk of his, a mere slip of his glib tongue. Part of our responsibility as black journalists is to bring our perspective to bear and to fill in the gaps between what the white community thinks about the black community and what our community really is. If we merely pander to their preconceived notions of us, we're not doing our job effectively."

Another part of a black journalist's job is to educate the black community to the dangers of its own racism and double standards, noted Larry Muhammad, assistant managing editor of the *Chicago Defender*, the oldest black newspaper in the country. "How can we expect the respect of the body politic when our most visible political spokesman lacks the sophistication to refrain from calling people crude names?" he wondered. "Our community must realize that we must give respect to get it. Now, I'm not sure if I would have taken Coleman's action, but I don't deny him his right to report what he thinks is important. And I think it's very important that we report the bad as well as the good about our leaders."

"Jesse made a mistake and it appears he's learned from it. The pit is, all of this could have blown over with little rancor had not Farrakhan jumped on the opportunity to boost his currency." In Muhammad's opinion, Farrakhan is simply "playing to the media's proclivity for sensationalism. He subscribes to a racist doctrine and it's about time that we in the black community realize that expressions of racism of any kind are not in our best interest."

Salim Muwakkil writes regularly for *In These Times*.

By Sam Bowles, David M. Gordon
and Thomas E. Weisskopf

This is the first in a series of four articles.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS remain critical—in our daily lives, if not in the current presidential campaign. All of us have been affected in one way or another by the current economic crisis. Yet the presidential candidates have had little to offer in the way of new approaches to the revitalization of the U.S. economy.

Many on the left have therefore begun the long, slow process of formulating a program for a democratic economic alternative. Some fear it is too late, because the economic recovery underway since early 1983 has diminished concern about economic issues. And others worry that the constraints of conventional political discourse will confine us to debates about industrial policy or tax reform or defense of social programs—in other words, to marginal assaults on our basic economic problems. Still others argue that specific programmatic demands, no matter how “progressive,” will lead at best to a kind of “left technocracy” or reformist co-optation; they warn that such a project inevitably involves us in “trying to rescue capitalism for the capitalists,” which diverts us from the longer-term project of building a powerful socialist movement in the United States. Finally, some conclude that a campaign on economic issues would undermine other critical political priorities, including struggles against sexism, racism, imperial intervention in Central America, militarism and environmental destruction.

These are critical issues; and we welcome the emerging debate among leftists in this country about economic alternatives, but we also think that reluctance to address economic restructuring is misplaced. We understand the grounds for hesitation, but we believe that a campaign around economic demands should be a major priority and opportunity for the left in the U.S.

We support our view in these articles devoted to four related propositions:

- Reaganomics has failed to reverse the long-term decline of the American economy. The failure of Reaganomics is due to its fundamentally mistaken perception of the sources of the economic crisis and to the implicit priority that it has placed on the perpetuation—indeed, enhancement—of economic privilege.
- A full understanding of the nature and extent of the waste that pervades our capitalist economy is essential for the formulation of an economic strategy to deal with the continuing economic crisis.
- Our analysis of the wastefulness of the U.S. economy leads us to suggest that a left economic program be based on the macro-economic principle of wage-led productivity growth. This approach addresses the structural sources of the continuing crisis and would enhance popular control over the reins of our economy, advancing the prospects for more fundamental political transformation in the U.S.

• As a result, we conclude, the political benefits of campaigning for an economic bill of rights far outweigh the potential costs. Mobilization for a democratic economic alternative is long overdue.

The failure of Reaganomics.

Since the beginning of 1983, the American economy has been recovering from the longest and deepest recession of the postwar period. The average annual rate of unemployment rose for three straight years after 1979—the first time this had happened since the '30s. Three and a half years of economic stagnation cost the American people more than a trillion dollars in lost output through idle workers and machines—a cost at least four times greater than the output lost in the worst previous postwar recession from 1973 to 1975.

The effects of the long recession have been disastrous. After a year of recovery, by the beginning of 1984, more than nine million workers were still unemployed—many in nearly abandoned communities

in the industrial heartland. The official count of those living in poverty has mounted by more than seven million since 1978. Income inequality also increased dramatically, and the “middle class” has dwindled. Recent U.S. census data reveal a development as intriguing to the statistician as it is crushing to the “American dream”: for the first time on record the U.S. income distribution is technically bimodal (double peaked), as the numbers of poor and well-to-do have surpassed those in the middle.

The international economic situation is hardly more auspicious. The U.S. balance of payments deficit is soaring out of sight; for the year 1984 it seems likely to attain a level equal to one-half of the value of all merchandise exports. This de-

ery has been underway. Real GNP grew by 6 percent in 1983, and the unemployment rate dropped from its peak of almost 11 percent to 8 percent. These trends have continued into 1984, though at a slower rate. Moreover, the rate of inflation has remained relatively low during this initial period of recovery.

Does this mean that the Paul Volcker-Ronald Reagan prescription for the economic stagnation of the '70s (a mixture of supply-side and monetarist medicine) was basically sound—if painful?

The underlying logic of their approach

corporate capital income dropped from 30 percent in 1981 to 23 percent in 1983.

Highly restrictive monetary policy, inaugurated in 1979 and continued for several years thereafter, provided the second essential element of the Volcker-Reagan strategy. While the nominal purpose of tight money was to break the inflationary spiral, its implicit logic was to control the rate of growth of wages by putting more bite into the threat of unemployment, helping employers gain the upper hand at the bargaining table. This element of the strategy succeeded in dramatically slowing wage growth. In 1983 there was an unprecedented decline in the level of money wages accepted for the first year of major multi-year collective bargaining agreements. Average real hourly employee compensation declined at an average annual rate of 0.7 percent between 1979 and 1983.

Though loudly applauded by business, these developments have not had their intended macro-economic effects.

First, despite administration rhetoric, Reaganomics has not “broken the back of inflation.” There is no doubt that inflation has slowed. But for the administration to have reversed stagflationary trends, it would have had to improve the inflation-unemployment trade-off.

This it has failed to do. The Reagan administration has simply purchased lower inflation with high unemployment on the same unfavorable terms as prevailed in the late '70s. Economic studies of postwar inflation conclude that inflation in 1983 was no lower than past experience would have suggested. Inflation was retarded at a huge cost—to those who could least afford it.

Reaganomics has failed to ameliorate the inflation-unemployment trade-off primarily because it has not addressed the most important source of inflationary pressure in the U.S.—the long-run slowdown in productivity growth. The administration promised that its “trickle-down” economics would launch investment into orbit. But, despite the retardation of wage growth and the lavish tax concessions, business investment has been falling rather than rising. Expenditures for new plant and equipment by U.S. nonfarm business (in real terms) fell by 5.2 percent from 1981 to 1982 and declined by another 2.9 percent from 1982 to 1983. By 1983 real net investment (as a percentage of net national product) had plummeted to a postwar low.

The effects of this investment collapse show up in the record on productivity growth. Nonfarm business productivity grew at an annual rate of 3.5 percent in 1983. But this was the slowest recovery of productivity growth in the entire postwar period, more than a third slower than the average for the first year of the other six cycle recoveries. We were promised a more than usually vibrant recovery of the economy's efficiency, for all our troubles, and we got the worst on record since World War II.

Why has Reaganomics failed so dramatically?

Many point the finger at high interest rates, linked to huge current and projected federal budget deficits. Investment is hardly likely to soar when the cost of borrowing funds is relatively high, and current real interest rates are extremely high. This helps explain the current target of Democratic fire; the Party's political leadership advocates varying combinations of higher taxes and reduced growth in military spending in order to cut the budget deficit and to achieve a more expansionary monetary policy.

But high interest rates are not the only, nor even the main culprit. The fundamental problem is the counter-productiveness of the redistributive trickle-down strategy itself. Its primary focus on boosting profits by holding down wages and consumption runs into problems on several fronts.

First, the strategy requires the economy

Continued on page 22

PERSPECTIVES

A left program for the economy must be a major priority



INX 1 1982 Robert Neubecker

bacle is in large measure the result of persistently slow growth in productivity and an overvalued dollar. And the stability of the world economy as a whole is still threatened by continuing Third World debt problems.

But many on the left nonetheless believe that the current recovery has somehow moderated the crisis and stolen the economic issue from the left (and from the Democratic Party). The White House, of course, delightedly encourages this impression.

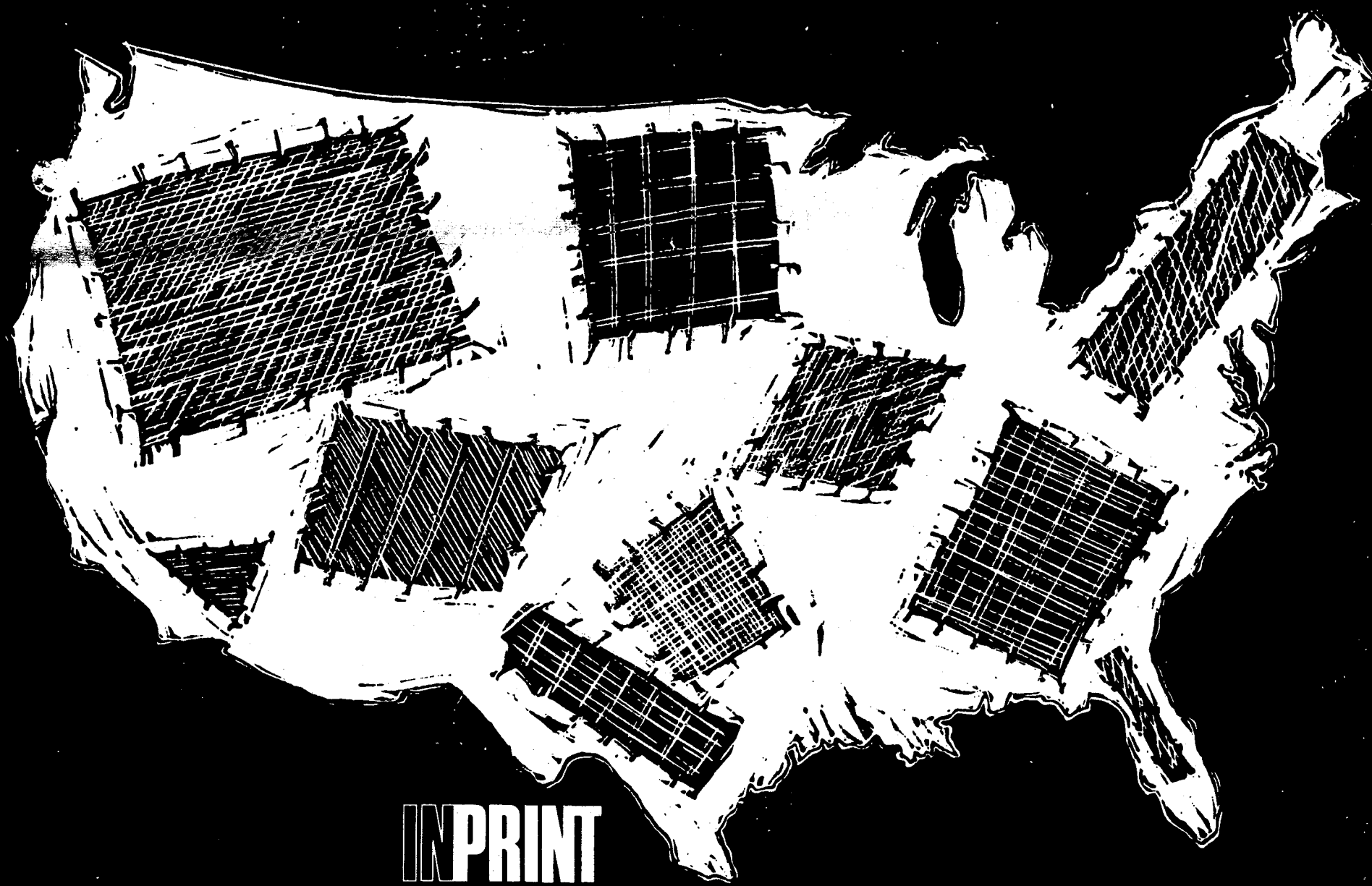
There can be no question that a recovery

The current recovery has not solved the problem of massive unemployment.

has been both stark and simple; it draws on the conventional wisdom of the “capital-shortage” analysis. Like so many contemporary politicians and economists, the Reagan administration has argued that business investment is the key to productivity growth and economic progress. Lagging investment, in their view, can be re-stimulated by boosting the after-tax profitability of corporations through a combination of tax breaks for business and concessions by labor. The continuing threat of unemployment is required to impose belt-tightening on workers and consumers.

This is a redistributive trickle-down strategy for economic recovery: its key is a redistribution from wages to profits and, as a consequence, from consumption to investment. Volcker and Reagan pursued the strategy with two principal policy instruments.

Reagan and the Congress provided one instrument in the form of the “Economic Recovery Act” of 1981. The results were soon apparent. The effective tax rate on



INPRINT

ECONOMICS

Rebuilding AmericaBy Gar Alperowitz & Jeff Faux
Pantheon Books, 319 pp., \$20.00

By Herbert Gintis

Like an ailing head of state, the American economy is being pumped full of pain killers and paraded gingerly before an anxious public. The Reagan administration is banking on its maintaining form, at least for the duration of the electoral campaign.

Insiders wonder only whether the temporizing will fail before or after the ballots are counted in November. Through it all, one thing is clear: we can no longer hope that the 1984 presidential campaign will provide a forum for the intelligent discussion of economic issues.

But equally true is the fact that in the long run economic policy is the political challenge of the late 20th century. And solving the problems of inflation, unemployment, productivity and economic growth are the keys to political power in capitalist democracies.

Many solutions have been offered over the past decade—among them reindustrialization, supply-side economics, monetarism, wage-led growth, constitutionally balanced budgets and revival of the gold standard. In *Rebuilding America*, Gar Alperowitz and Jeff Faux offer yet another. They have not given their vision of recovery a pithy label, but it might be called community economic development.

They approach economic problems by asking how they have affected the average worker and consumer. Then they identify two types of problems. First, people suffer increasing costs and declining availability of basic necessities: food, energy, medical care and housing. They respond by suggesting democratically planned community-based initiatives to tackle and control these prob-

lems. Second, people increasingly live under the threat (or worse, the reality) of unemployment. To counter this, they propose extensive public programs, putting the unemployed to work building bridges, highways, roads, railroads, harbors, mass transit systems, water supply networks and other forms of social infrastructure that have deteriorated during the past two decades.

Most noteworthy is their stress on community participation and preservation. Conventional wisdom, they point out, "places no value on community.... It favors policy that assists 'people' rather than 'places.'" They contrast this with community-oriented approaches such as that of Dan Luria and Jack Russell, who propose concrete, economically feasible and locally-controlled alternatives to the automobile industry.

It is easy to understand why the programs sketched in *Rebuilding America* might be opposed by the rich and the powerful. Increasing democratic planning implies curbing elite control, and enhancing the power of local communities curtails the options of national and multinational corporations. Stressing basic economic necessities leaves the affluent consumer less than wildly enthusiastic. And curing unemployment through vigorous public works programs has certainly not pacified conservatives, who are panicked by the threat and potential high cost of "tight" labor markets.

The authors combine the Students for a Democratic Society's

vision of participatory democracy and economic justice with Saul Alinsky's stress on community-based power, and they package the message in traditional liberal language. The goals are admirable and the packaging no mean feat. Too often the American left has spurned popular discourse for the stilted idiom of other cultures, other eras and other political battles. Writing in accessible contemporary political language is one of Gar Alperowitz and Jeff Faux's great strengths.

Yet although they inspire confidence as builders and architects, their insight into political economy is shaky. And although they discuss creatively and intelligently the planning of public

and seriously underestimate the obstacles to their rebuilding plans. Thus their proposals are too radical to implement in the current economic context, while at the same time too conservative to achieve the structural changes needed to cure our economic ills.

The current economic situation reflects a structural failure: the rules and institutions that worked well in the first two post-war decades have seized up. To get the economy back on track, it is not enough to suggest a change of leadership, economic philosophy, public commitment or distributional priorities. We need changes in economic institutions and the relationship between state and economy at least as extensive as the ones the Keynesian welfare state inaugurated between 1935 and 1945.

The authors rightly scorn liberals and conservatives, who are more comfortable advising cutbacks than contemplating fundamental change. Yet they themselves do not attempt to identify structural problems. The main culprit is what they call the broker state, "a haphazard arrangement in which spending programs are awarded to those groups that develop sufficient political clout to get a favored space at the Keynesian spigot." The offending groups are the military, demanding bloated defense expenditures; the super-rich, demanding tax cuts; and the largest corporations, demanding tax relief and bail-outs for weaker members like Penn Central, Lockheed, Chrysler and Franklin National Bank.

The current economic situation reflects a structural failure.

works programs, the structuring of community development corporations and the formulation of energy policy, they are unconvincing when discussing inflation, unemployment, productivity and international trade.

They misunderstand the origins of our economic quandary

Their plan, however, is no more structural than the more traditional offerings. Alperowitz and Faux's alternative (democratic planning) involves redirecting government beneficence away from special interest groups to the people as a whole.

Unsystematic insights.

Why has economic productivity declined so precipitously in recent years? Why has it become impossible to keep the unemployment rate at a reasonably low level without excessive and accelerating inflation? Why have problems of the international economy so severely restricted progressive economic policy?

Alperowitz and Faux provide unsystematic insights. They are agnostic on the sources of productivity decline, which they explain by saying that "everything went wrong at once." The deterioration of U.S. competitiveness in the world economy is treated as a minor annoyance whose dangers have been dramatically overstated.

"Our coal, natural gas, sunlight and even oil taken together could make us energy self-sufficient in a few short years.... Perhaps the most basic difficulty with our public debate on America's role in the world economy is simply the excessive emphasis given to trade-related issues. Trade policy should be the natural outgrowth of full employment and price stability policies."

The authors' treatment of the unemployment/inflation relationship—on whose shoals the most imaginative economic programs have foundered—denies its existence. European socialists, who have had three decades to grapple with the effectiveness of social-democratic programs such as these, would doubtless marvel at the credulity of their American counterparts.

Such programs have contrib-

uted heavily to European prosperity, but they have foundered with the collapse of economic prosperity. When there is unemployment in Sweden or inflation in France, social-democratic regimes have been quite as confounded as liberal or conservative ones. In England, the Thatcher government was not re-elected on the basis of its promises, but because of public distrust of the Labour Party.

Alperowitz and Faux first show that neither rising credit availability nor deficit spending leads to inflation. Indeed, they take the notion that inflation is related to the money supply as economic mysticism. They then argue that inflation did not result from attempting to maintain employment levels at all. Rather, "The most important cause of our inflation has been a series of price 'jolts,' the effects of which spiral thereafter through the economy in higher prices, interest rates and wages."

Such "jolts" can be handled relatively simply, they believe, with a judicious dose of wage-and-price controls. Yet the standard interpretation holds that there is a systematic trade-off between levels of unemployment and price inflation. This trade-off reflects structural conditions. And the curve has shifted over the past dozen years so that full employment is extremely difficult to achieve without making either structural changes in the relations between business, labor and government, or by creating high, perhaps accelerating, levels of price inflation. While this relationship has been disputed (especially by right-wing monetarists and supply-siders), it has by no means been discredited. *Rebuilding America* does not even seriously make the attempt.

Their attempt to sidestep the structural problems of the capitalist economy, however well intentioned, comes to naught. The American people have hard choices to make in the coming years. The overriding question is: who controls? Both in the U.S. and Europe, the post-war era has witnessed a great increase in the power of workers and citizens to challenge political and economic elites through the democratic process.

These elites continue to control economic power, but popular initiatives have curtailed their freedom to maneuver. The people would welcome change, but lack the power to restructure the economic rules of the game that make change possible. The result is stasis: the current economic crisis manifests this stalemate between producer and consumer, business and electorate, boss and worker. Resolving this crisis will require the collapse of traditional axes of power.

The corresponding structural changes in the economy will either strengthen the propertied and the powerful at the expense of democratic institutions, or will lead to true democratization of decision-making in production and investment. The development of liberal democratic capitalism has extended the range of human rights and has also seen the deepening private power of corporate wealth. The next domain to be conquered by democracy is the economy. Only when workers and citizens gain control of the economic decision-making will they be able to implement the programs outlined in Alperowitz and Faux's book.

Herbert Gintis is a professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

FICTION

A novel more like memory than history

Democracy

By Joan Didion
Simon and Schuster, 234 pp., \$13.95

By Rachel B. Gorlin

Consider this bare outline of the action in *Democracy*: in the spring of 1975, Inez Victor, wife of liberal-chic former U.S. senator and presidential aspirant Harry Victor, returns to her native Hawaii after her somewhat crazy father shoots her sister and the U.S. congressman with whom the sister was probably having an affair.

While in Honolulu Inez runs into, and then runs off with, an old flame, Jack Lovett, more than 20 years her senior, with whom she started sleeping while she was in high school. They have not touched each other since 1953. Starting in the early '50s, Lovett became involved in only vaguely specified ways with the American military, the Central Intelligence Agency and the international "intelligence" network's activities in Southeast Asia.

Which is to say that the wife of a man who had been one of the Vietnam war's chief congressional opponents goes off to Southeast Asia with a spook.

Also consider that Jack Lovett comes off as a considerably more attractive human being than Harry Victor—the sort of CIA operative Yves Montand might play in a Costa-Gavras movie. And consider that Joan Didion, who rather confusingly refers to herself by name as the narrator of this novel, believes "fiction is in most ways hostile to ideology." This assumption turns out to be enormously helpful in creating *Democracy's* milieu, because a history of recent events in Southeast Asia seems hostile to ideology as well.

Democracy—or, more precisely, the idea of it—emerges as a conceit. Harry Victor, at a dinner of the "Alliance for Democratic Institutions" (obviously a send-up of the now-defunct Center for Democratic Institutions, about which Didion wrote snidely in *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*), declares that he never talks down to the American people. "Either

Jefferson was right or he wasn't," Harry had said. "I happen to believe he was."

Politicians like Harry Victor make a mockery of Jefferson's democracy, Didion implies, without indicating that the alternatives are any better or even more efficient, as Jack Lovett might have claimed before the "fall" or "liberation" (depending on your point of view) of Southeast Asia in spring 1975.

For some of us, the spectacle of what happened in Southeast Asia in the first half of 1975 marked the true psychological end of the '60s—or should have, except that it came too late. In retrospect, many people who shared Harry Victor's political orientation at that time probably underestimated the damage the U.S. had done in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia by thinking that enough of the political culture had been left intact to allow for some beneficent governance. While Jack Lovett and his fellow inhabitants of that shadow world of "intelligence" understood the extent of the destruction, it simply got factored into the cost of doing business.

Democracy looks at the costs of doing various kinds of business—electoral politics, covert operations, modern marriage and the intrigues of Hawaii's oli-

garchy. Implicit is the assumption that the price paid is too high, unless the commerce is seen as a game. And even then players are consigned to an emotional and moral purgatory, or, alternatively, death itself.

Jack Lovett dies, Harry Victor ends up as a special envoy to the Common Market, and only Inez Victor—who describes "memory" as the major cost of public life—is left in Southeast Asia, resettling refugees in Kuala Lumpur. Now, as Didion herself might ask, what does that tell you?

It would be helpful for the purposes of determining more precisely how Joan Didion's *Democracy* is hostile to ideology if we knew Inez Victor's thoughts about political values or even events in Southeast Asia. But like nearly all of Didion's women, Inez spends most of her mental energy in the service of elaborate mechanisms to cope with the exigencies of daily life.

A state of mind.

Since that perspective is available only by implication, we go with what we have. And what we have is a searing indictment of late 20th-century American political and social values, convention and practice. Nevertheless, it is an indictment with ample room for

mitigating and extenuating circumstances. Didion's genius is for the mitigating circumstance rather than for the broad critique.

Many of the worlds depicted in this book have been scathingly portrayed elsewhere—the circus of American political campaigns in Gore Vidal, the privileged Manhattan of Bloomingdale's and the Dalton School in literally dozens of novels, Southeast Asia particularly memorably by Graham Greene. *Democracy* makes connections between these states of mind, but the effect is more like memory than history.

Perhaps you recall the urgency of the news accounts of the "fall" or "liberation" of Southeast Asia, the panicked evacuations, the overcrowded air lifts, the procession of orphans and government officials and "those who have been helpful to U.S. interests." On the right there was the incessant talk about the "domino theory." The left had its "celebration" of the peoples' victory in Vietnam, complete with T-shirts and demonstrations in Central Park.

Democracy conjures up such associations with an economy of deft narrative strokes. For example: "Mother wants you to call home," the American Service Radio announcer in Saigon would say when it was time for the final phase of the evacuation, and then a certain record would be played.

"The record to be played was Bing Crosby singing 'I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas.'"

Or: "Oh shit, Inez," Jack Lovett said one night in the spring of 1975, one night outside Honolulu in the spring of 1975, one night in the spring of 1975 when the C-130s and the C-141s were already shuttling between Honolulu and Anderson and Clark and Saigon all night long, thirty-minute turnaround at Tan Son Nhut, touching down and loading and taxiing out on flight idle, bringing out the dependents, bringing out the dealers, bringing out the money, bringing out the pet dogs and the sponsored bar girls and the porcelain elephants: "Oh shit, Inez," Jack Lovett said to Inez Victor, "Harry Victor's wife."

Many settings in the book are familiar from Didion's non-fiction. Her Hawaii is particularly vivid. Not surprisingly, then, the places rather than the characters linger in one's mind. The description of Jack Lovett, as a man for whom "the accidental did not figure" and for whom "information was an end in itself," is fascinating and evocative, yet one knows about him more than one knows him.

Didion's sense of the colloquial is always a delight. In fact, if ideology does not much inform one's description of the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia, a line of dialogue in *Democracy* could serve as an apt characterization of the whole undertaking: "It's Snow White and the Seven Loons down there."

Yet strangely, given the acerbity of Didion's portraits and the backdrop of a sordid episode in recent U.S. history, *Democracy* on the surface seems much more optimistic than Didion's other novels. Inez Victor is able to settle into useful work in Kuala Lumpur, yet only because she has mastered the technique of a successful refugee. She never looks back, has no past, learns no lessons—in many ways just like American democracy.

Rachel B. Gorlin is a free-lance journalist living in New York.

Joan Didion explores the recent past in *DEMOCRACY*.



Jerry Bauer

Didion believes that "fiction is hostile to ideology." Events in Southeast Asia seem hostile to ideology, too.

By Pat Aufderheide

The World of Tomorrow brings us face to face with the American past by showing us how we once thought of our future. It does so by playing on our nostalgia for the good old days—our romance with the safely stable—catering to our love for the first-person narrative format in film.

The documentary's theme is the World's Fair of 1939 from the perspective of both its designers and those who attended. Secretly, it's a social history of late-Depression America, depicted through attitudes toward progress.

The filmmakers are pros at this sort of thing. Producer-directors Tom Johnson and Lance Bird also made *America Lost and Found*, a film about Depression America shown on PBS' Non-Fiction Television series, and *No Place to Hide*, a half-hour look at U.S. propaganda films from 1946 to 1964. Both were constructed out of the same material as this film: archival film footage from corporate, governmental and news sources.

What the filmmakers have learned about American history is intrinsic to this documentary, but not mechanistically apparent. The script, by science-fiction writer John Crowley, creates a fictional character, a little boy who went to the World's Fair in 1939, and set about learning in 1979 what else had happened there. (This film took four years to put together.) Jason Robards' elegiac narration of the boy's dazed, slightly intimidated perspective recreates a quality the filmmakers find fundamental to the era: innocence about scientific progress, now lost in the wake of revelations about the hidden cost of innovation and the failed promises of social engineers.

The World's Fair, we learn, was a calculated mix of showmanship and social planning—a campaign to put dollars into New York City's coffers and offer a new social vision to Depression-era Americans. Fair President Grover Whalen, fresh from the National Recovery Administration, applied everything he'd learned in business and government to make it a success. What he had learned added up, it seems, to the importance of hype. Whalen was an early expert at the photo opportunity.

This recovered footage, wittily edited (by Kate Hirson) to make sharp points without seeming to hurry the viewer, captures the importance of image-shaping in mounting the World's Fair as no cold-print analysis ever could.

The World's Fair was a calculated mix of showmanship and social planning, offering a new vision to Depression-era Americans.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

DOCUMENTARY

Fair memories of the future

New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and Whalen pop up together in newsreel after advertisement after media event, conscientiously flogging the fair.

Whalen is ever-spontaneous, especially on cue—as we see in footage showing two takes of one piece of staged spontaneity. One shudders to think where he'd be in this administration. In any case, it's clear that big business and big government have been selling the sizzle, not the steak, to the American people for a long time.

Along with the business background, the film uses old home movies and corporate promotional films to retrace the fictional narrator's path through the fair. The theme was scientific progress, and the narration carefully explains why that theme was then so important. Quite simply, Americans needed hope in a

spanking-new future because their present was so dingy. One of the most believable lines is the narrator's recollection, "I like the fair—it was so clean." His meaning is clear in scenes of shocking urban and rural poverty intercut with the fair's slightly ominous splendor (reminiscent of both *Metropolis* and 1984).

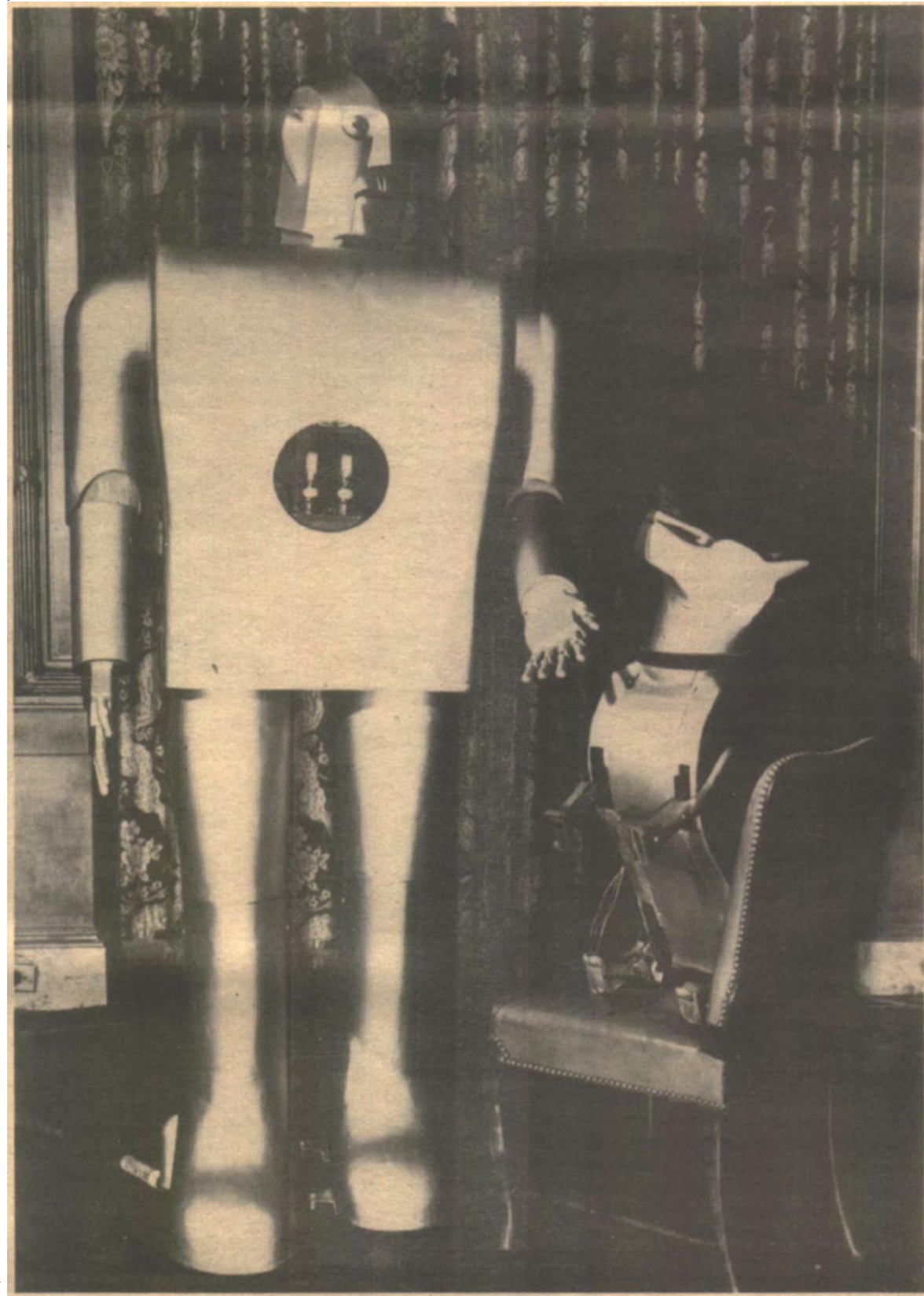
The film gently points out the different views of progress within the fair. The most obvious—the Russian pavilion's paeans to workers versus the American corporate exhibits' paeans to consumers—is only briefly alluded to. Within American society, the clash was between professionals and business executives, and the filmmakers bring this out without stressing it. City planners associated with Lewis Mumford envisioned cities within a democratic society, while General Motors, in its always-packed Fu-



turama exhibit, imagined them next to freeways. Albert Einstein spoke on the need for social responsibility in scientific achievements, while Westinghouse engineers assured housewives that they could entrust their futures to Reddy Kilowatt.

If the filmmakers have an opinion about which vision should have won and which did win, they keep it to themselves. They emphasize that any real science was subordinated at the fair to the fireworks, the electric robots and the gimmicks. Even so, the public did not flock there in numbers that could net New York

"Electro," the art-deco robot (with "Sparko," his dog), enchanted fair visitors by counting on his fingers and joking with tour guides.



City or the fair any profits.

People were intimidated by the challenge of progress, it seems. At least that was the conclusion the fair's sponsors reached. In the second and last year of the fair, they lowered the entrance fee and muted the new-social-vision stuff. Instead of hyping the planned city of the future (displayed in mockup inside the fair's huge central globe and showing a striking resemblance to Brasilia today), they advertised the free dancing, the amusement park and the fun for "the ordinary guy."

Once again without poking you in the ribs, the filmmakers provoke the viewer into thinking about the terms of society then and now. Both promotional campaigns aimed at the American masses were patronizingly populist. In the first year, people had been encouraged to learn about what the scientists and engineers were planning for their future. In the second, people were encouraged to throw themselves into a giant pleasure machine.

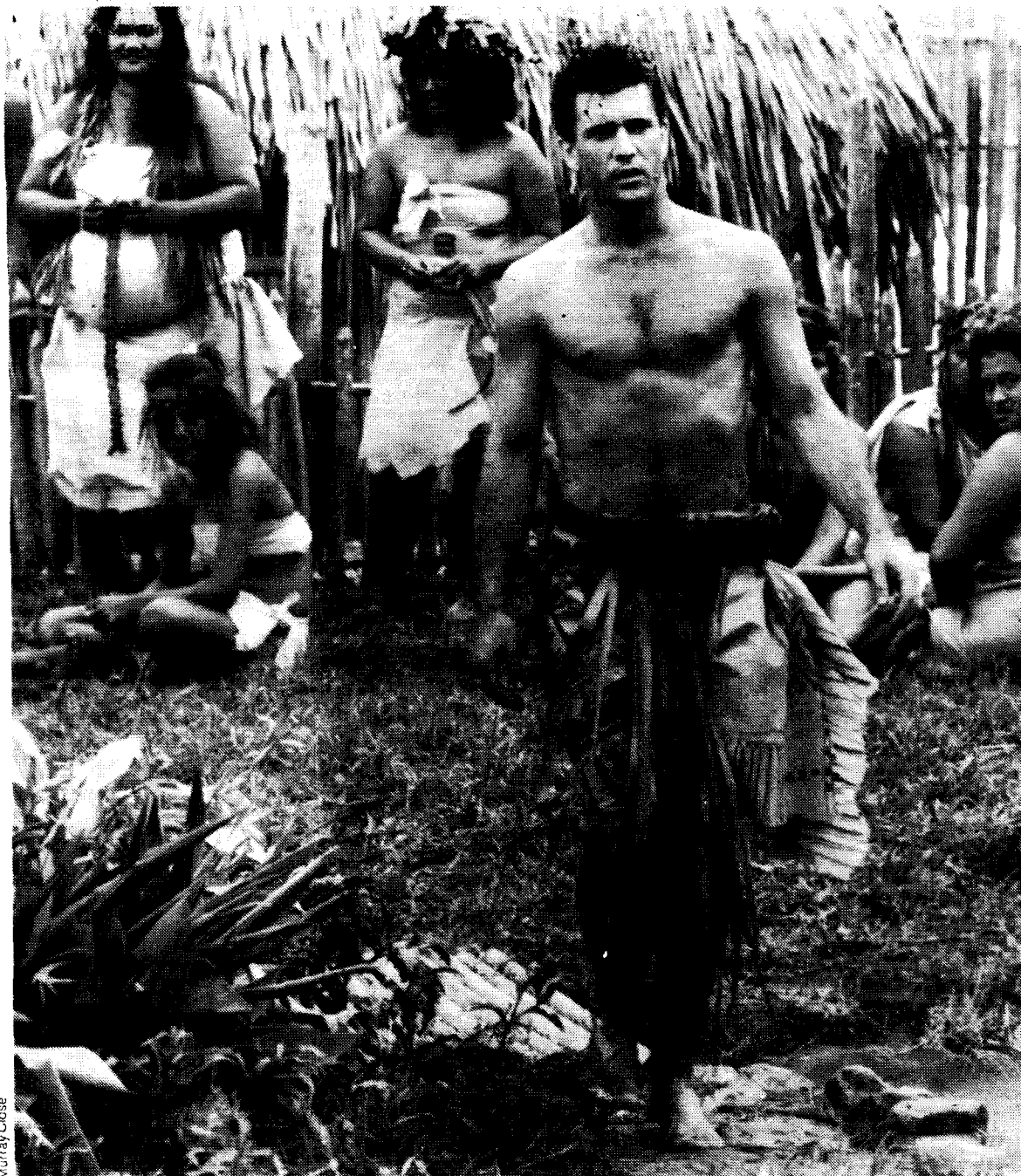
Leisure became industrialized, as the documentary indicates. A Max Fleischer animated cartoon shows a dithering farm couple on an assembly line of fair thrills. Footage from the time shows Billy Rose's Aquacade, in which women perform aquatic acrobatics with production-line precision.

This appeal didn't work much better, but the reason may not have been that Americans were not ready for factory-like fun. International affairs overwhelmed the whole concept, and the war solved the problem of a faltering economy. Exhibits tell the story. The 1939 Russian pavilion, with a huge worker's statue, has disappeared by 1940, and jingoistic displays of American patriotism are staged there instead. A film made by Lithuanians about Lithuanian Day at the fair isn't even completed before Lithuania disappears. The real world of tomorrow was coming to the fair more quickly than any of its touted futures.

A conceit holds together this elegant recapturing of a historical moment. The filmmakers observe that the 1939 World's Fair was "a compass rose pointing in all directions. Toward imaginary future and real past, false future and immutable present...." On second hearing, this statement seems perilously close to gibberish. In the sense that it is true, any historical moment is. Its pseudo-profundity justifies the viewer's fascination with the clothes, foods and fads of the past, assuring us that it's all meaningful somehow without forcing us to figure out just how. On the other hand, the conceit does function as a cheaply durable structure on which to hang the sequences, and it doesn't get in the way of the insights these sequences evoke.

With its unobtrusive and canny combination of nostalgia and revisionism, *The World of Tomorrow* is proving to be more than a movie for its audiences. Starting out as a baby-boom kind of film, it has quickly become multigenerational in its appeal, often drawing parents and kids to the same screening. In New York, ushers face a rare problem: clearing the lobby in time for the next show. As they leave, it seems, people get so involved in comparing impressions of the film and recollections of the era that heated discussions—even family arguments—fill the lobby. That may be testimonial enough to the film's ability both to evoke and to provoke.

©Pat Aufderheide



Murray Close

Mel Gibson goes native.

If the world was Britain's oyster, then Tahiti was a pearl only recently captured. Although the Tahitians were more hospitable than some other Pacific islanders to Europeans, their first encounters were difficult. Sailors used iron products (not available on these islands) to barter for sexual favors. Widespread venereal disease resulted. (After sailing to Pitcairn Island with Tahitian men and women in tow, the mutineers quarreled murderously over the women.)

The filmmakers regard the encounter between Europeans and Tahitians as "laid back." Donaldson has European and Tahitian beachcombers affect an attitude of lethargic insouciance, and one half-expects Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello to lead a sing-along around the luau.

But while Donaldson dwells on gorgeous Tahitian sunsets and sun-drenched beaches, he does little to explain why Christian and the crew mutinied once back on board the *Bounty*.

Why did they mutiny in 1789? Although momentarily at peace, Britain had been at war for many years. Its attempt to achieve naval hegemony and commercial supremacy engaged the navy in a global arms race and capitalists in a search for cheap resources and labor. The voyage of the *Bounty* was a joint venture by naval and commercial interests in England in quest of empire. Its mission was simple. The navy would transport Tahitian breadfruit plants to Jamaica, where sugar planters would use locally grown breadfruit to replace more expensive imported foodstuffs for their slaves.

Empire does not come cheap. Impoverished sailors created naval hegemony, just as plantation slaves created commercial supremacy. In the effort to keep labor costs down, the navy paid the same wages they had offered in 1650. During the 18th century, captains demanded more work aboard naval vessels and enforced discipline more stringently to accomplish this aim. Summary corporal punishment became common and punishment for infractions of the increasingly severe articles of war was savage. Sailors complained, with justification, that the navy treated them no better than slaves. Bligh may not have been uncommonly

cruel, but cruelty was increasingly common.

For the *Bounty's* crew, the breadfruit provided both motive and opportunity for mutiny. To make room for it, Bligh crowded a crew about to make a 10-month voyage home. This, along with yearning for what they had left behind and distaste for what lay ahead, provided the crew with a motive. But the breadfruit also provided a rare opportunity. Bligh had no room to carry the standard complement of marines, who would have maintained order and protected him. And Bligh's route from Tahiti to Jamaica took the mutinous crew to a part of the world where they could escape.

As tea was to Boston's patriots, breadfruit was to Bligh's crew. Immediately after seizing the *Bounty*, the mutineers dumped the breadfruit overboard. This act assumed great importance in the first two films, but little in this one—the breadfruit merely supplies ammunition for a parting shot at Bligh. (Bligh subsequently transported the breadfruit to Jamaica, but slaves refused to eat it.)

The *Bounty* mutiny was a harbinger. Mutiny and strikes (the word "strike" comes from a work stoppage by British sailors in the 1760s) increased in the years after the *Bounty's* seizure. Eight years later, during war with France, entire British fleets mutinied, raised the red flag, established republics afloat, blockaded the Thames and successfully demanded that slave-like conditions be changed. The *Bounty* mutiny was the opening salvo of a late 18th-century general strike at sea.

The film gives no hint of these events. Its narrow interpretation of the mutiny dismisses relevant history and demeans the motives of the men involved. Having dispensed with the wider historical drama, Donaldson can dwell only on lush tropical forests, sandy beaches and amorous natives.

The *Bounty* is a pretty film but a barren one. It manages to take a dramatic confrontation at sea and make it about as exciting as a *Love Boat* episode. That's too bad. The tale of Christian and Bligh is still worth telling, time and again.

Robert Schaeffer reviews movies for *Not Man Apart*, the news-magazine of *Friends of the Earth*. He wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the seafaring proletariat in the 17th and 18th centuries.

MOVIES

A pretty but barren mutiny against history

By Robert Schaeffer

Some people think that a remake is never as good as the original. But a good yarn is always worth retelling. The latest version of the mutiny on the *Bounty*, which pairs Anthony Hopkins and Mel Gibson as William Bligh and Fletcher Christian, doesn't so much remake an old film as rewrite the history of the mutiny.

Dino De Laurentiis and director Roger Donaldson base their version on Richard Hough's *Captain Bligh and Mr. Christian* rather than on Charles Nordoff and James Hall's *Mutiny on the Bounty*. (Both the 1935 Charles Laughton-Clark Gable version and the 1962 Trevor Howard-Marlon Brando remake are based on the later book.)

The current version relies more heavily on historical documents—the *Bounty's* log and Admiralty Court records—than did the earlier films. But this version produces a less accurate history and a less entertaining film. Director Donaldson uses Hough's book to exonerate Bligh, trivialize the mutiny and reduce the dramatic narrative to a Tahitian travelogue.

Richard Nixon would do well to observe how Hollywood has rehabilitated the infamous Bligh. Donaldson portrays him as a wronged man, having to explain to a skeptical Admiralty Court how he lost his ship. In this version, Bligh is on trial and the British navy is deployed against him rather than the mutineers. In

fact, the navy eventually hanged three mutineers and drowned four. It promoted Bligh and made him governor of New South Wales, where, some years later, he precipitated another mutiny.

Anthony Hopkins portrays Bligh as an excellent navigator, a loyal friend to Christian, a fair if somewhat prudish family man and a leader—at least of the sailors he guided 2,618 miles across the Pacific in an open boat. By all accounts, Bligh was an excellent navigator. And by his own account, he was loyal, fair and brave. But Hough's account is drawn from the *Bounty's* log, which Bligh wrote. It is dangerous to judge a man only by his memoirs. Unfortunately, the mutineers were not so scrupulous with their own accounts. Few of them could write, and Christian was no James Michener.

Bligh was not the incorrigible sadist depicted by Charles Laughton. Yet this doesn't mean that the crew did not labor under extremely oppressive conditions or have reason to mutiny. The new film depicts the sailors' complaints as relatively minor. They are reluctant to leave fresh food and amorous Tahitian women behind and fear another attempt to circumnavigate Cape Horn on the way to Jamaica. Fletcher Christian's complaints are selfish and childish. He falls in love with a Tahitian princess, pouts when confined to the ship by the disciplinarian Bligh, complains that he is required to dress for dinner and agrees to lead the mutiny so that he can make his pregnant

princess an honest woman. Christian's and the crew's motives for mutiny are capricious and cowardly.

The film spends most of the time on Tahiti, rather than on board ship. Had Donaldson investigated the relations between Europeans and Tahitians, the time might have been well spent. But the relationship between voyage-weary sailors and the generous Tahitians is treated in a shallow fashion.



Salvador

Continued from page 11

A devaluation would be an immediate payoff to the agro-exporters, mostly ARENA backers, for accepting defeat in the election, according to the political scientist. Yet a devaluation would be political suicide for Duarte, especially at the beginning of his term. Even with a 10 percent wage increase, the Jesuit Central American University predicts an immediate 37 percent jump in the general price index. The recent food riots in the Dominican Republic following International Monetary Fund (IMF)-ordered austerity measures could be repeated in El Salvador if a devaluation causes prices to soar.

Thus Duarte is in a precarious position, caught between his promises and the need to accommodate the real powers of the country—the private sector, the military and the U.S. “For the next six months, Duarte will be trying to stay in power and survive,” said the political scientist.

Death-squad investigation.

Duarte's first post-election promises have been to investigate the death squads and initiate a dialog with the opposition. Investigating the death squads is a delicate matter, since it means confronting the military, which has been deeply involved. Yet the U.S. has reportedly sought to convince army chief of staff Adolfo Blandon of the importance at this time of significant moves against some officers with blatant death-squad connections. Blandon has been told that just after the elections El Salvador faces a critical moment when it needs to change its image.

Some observers expect several officers to be sacrificed—four of the officers with the most notorious death squad connections are usually named. They are Nicolas Carranza, head of the Treasury Police; Lt. Col. Adalberto Cruz, commander of Morazan Province and an outspoken ARENA supporter; Lt. Col. Dennis Moran, whose bodyguard was one of the confessed assassins of the U.S. labor advisors killed at the Sheraton Hotel and whose troops actively campaigned for ARENA in Zacatecoluca; and Lt. Col. Roberto Staben, who joined D'Aubuisson in a 1980 coup attempt and presently heads the U.S.-trained ARCE battalion. While any action against a military officer is significant in El Salvador, the removal of four officers barely scratches the surface.

Duarte's promise to negotiate will likely produce even fewer results. He claims he will talk to the left but only after he has done away with the social injustices that have caused the conflict. Then, Duarte says, the guerrillas will come out of the hills and participate in the democratic process. The only guerrillas who remain there will be a few hardcore delinquents, according to Duarte.

This formulation repeats the Reagan administration's position that the only point it will negotiate with the left is its participation in elections. The FDR-FMLN has already rejected this position, calling for negotiations leading to a “government of broad participation” that will restructure the armed forces, institute reforms and prepare for general elections. Duarte's position, in effect, rejects any dialog with the left.

Even if he were serious about negotiations, neither the military nor the U.S. would permit it. Neither have any interest in negotiations that might lead to a coalition government that they fear could wind up being dominated by the left.

Nevertheless, some observers expect a flurry of diplomatic activity, meetings with the FMLN and shuttle diplomacy by Reagan's special presidential envoy—all timed to give the impression of movement toward a peaceful solution during Reagan's re-election campaign. Yet from the outset, such negotiations are unlikely to achieve any success.

Instead, Duarte has given the Reagan administration the moderate front it needs to pursue its military campaign against the FMLN. With substantive negotiations unlikely, the conflict will continue on the battlefield. If the FMLN can

break the present stalemate and continue its previous growth, the only options the U.S. will face are to negotiate, admit defeat or intervene more directly. Despite his protestations last week, Duarte may be, as the FMLN claims, the president installed by the Reagan administration to request direct intervention.

Miners

Continued from page 9

(Manchester) “should be regarded as outrageous in a democratic society.”

Police maintain roadblocks on all major roads leading into the Nottinghamshire and Lancashire coalfields. Drivers are stopped, questioned and refused permission to drive on unless they convince the police that they are not pickets. Those that object are arrested for “obstruction.” Arrested men are not being tried but released by the courts on bail on condition that they do not picket again.

Bill Ross, a faceworker at Maltby, showed this reporter a pass issued by his union officers. He has been arrested twice but not charged. After the first arrest Ross spent three weeks wearing a cervical collar. Now he must show police his pass, stating that he is not a picket but is engaged on other valid union business, to gain access to Nottinghamshire. “It is getting like South Africa,” he told *In These Times*. “Black miners have to have a pass to leave their own township, and we need a pass to get out of Maltby.”

The police have arrested four leading miners' union officers and two Labour MPs. The secretary of the Notts NUM was released when police (who had manhandled him) found out who he was. One of the Labour MPs was also released. Hundreds of miners have been arrested, usually charged with obstruction or assault. Some miners have been strip-searched at the roadside, while others have been systematically questioned in police stations about their political beliefs.

The miners are also increasingly bitter against the press. When one miner was killed while picketing, broadcast and newspaper journalists were more concerned with the fact that he had been arrested earlier after a soccer match than with the manner of his death. Ludicrous allegations have been made against militant miners' leaders, including the charge that one of Arthur Scargill's research officers is a “foreigner” (like MacGregor, she is American).

Strikebreaking may dwindle now that the dispute has turned into a national miners' strike. Tactically, the NUM leaders may have erred in not permitting a ballot, but the dispute is now well under way, and a vote would seem a little late at this stage. Besides, opinion polls show that a majority of miners support the strike. Although the flying pickets will now focus more on docks and power stations than on the few pits where scabbing continues, clearly heavy-handed policing will go on.

Harsh signs of poverty are already visible in the mining areas. Cardboard collecting boxes are in the corners of most supermarkets, videos and home computers have been returned to rental agencies, crowds at soccer matches have shrunk. Several Labour-controlled town councils are giving free dinners to miners' children.

Community support.

At the same time, communities are giving a heartening degree of support to the strike. Meetings and concerts have been packed. Miners collecting money in the streets of Sheffield reckoned that they had received an average of more than a pound from each person they approached.

Nowhere is the degree of community support clearer than among the miners' families. Token strikes have occurred at three South Yorkshire schools in sympathy with the miners, old-age pensioners have given freely to strike funds. For perhaps the first time in any British mining dispute, the women of the coalfields have

organized to support the menfolk, rather than leaving the strike to their husbands.

In some areas, women were involved before the dispute started. They were prominent in Durham, for example, in the Save Easington Area Mines campaign. Later, women organized on an impromptu basis after seeing newspaper reports claiming that miners' wives opposed the strike. Kent women organized after an argument in a ladies' skittles team. In Sheffield and Barnsley there has been explicitly feminist participation. And on May 12, 8,000 women demonstrated in Barnsley to support the strike.

The women's groups are highly successful in collecting food and money and raising morale. They have also ended the press reports about miners' wives. And they have started to pressure their husbands to see the struggle through. Severance payments might buy a cottage for the man involved, but pit closure would mean the dole queue for his sons and daughters.

The women's groups have challenged attitudes in this most male of all British industries. When Jack Collins, secretary of the Kent miners, accused Nottinghamshire miners of “hiding behind their wives' skirts,” he was rebuked by Arthur Scargill on two grounds—first, because 6,000 Nottinghamshire men had already joined the strike, and second, because the women's support had been “fantastic.” The audience loudly applauded this.

Women must also confront basic problems of sexism on the picket lines. One miner's wife recently reprimanded a group of miners who had been jeering female office workers. “How can you expect me to support you if you don't take us seriously?” she asked.

To succeed, the miners will need support from the rest of the labor movement. Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock, a miner's son, has been lukewarm in his support for the NUM. Nor was the Trades Union Congress keen to become involved while miners were crossing their own picket lines. Even so, the transport unions have urged their members to refuse to handle coal and several ports have turned imported coal away, while Nottinghamshire railway workers have been disciplined for obstructing coal trucks. Unions in Eastern-bloc countries such as Poland recently agreed to halt coal exports to England.

The strike is hardly likely to bring the government down, as its predecessor did in 1974. It may not even be winnable. The best outcome, from the miners' point of view, would be assurance from the government of further massive subsidy to the industry and Coal Board agreement not to proceed with its closure program. Yet this was precisely the compromise reached in February 1981.

The miners know that all they can achieve is another delay. But many of them no longer care if the industry is damaged by the strike. If they are going to go down in defeat, at least they want to go down fighting.

John Field works in labor education at Northern College, South Yorkshire, and has close connections with the Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire areas of the NUM. Donations for strike support can be sent to: National Union of Mineworkers, St. James' House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, England.

Crisis

Continued from page 17

to operate well below full productive capacity for a protracted period of time. Apart from the human costs, such underutilization of existing productive equipment depresses both productivity and investment, undermining the potential for future growth. Wage austerity also has a variety of counter-productive effects on both management initiative and worker effort (which we shall explore later in this series).

And yet the essential content of the redistributive trickle-down strategy—the notion that raising business profitability is the key to stimulating investment and growth, and that to do this workers will

have to accept a period of austerity—has become the conventional economic wisdom of a large part of the political spectrum in the U.S. To develop an alternative economic strategy, we must reject the misguided logic of the conventional wisdom and demonstrate the potential for recovery inherent in the waste that now pervades our society.

As we shall see in subsequent articles in this series, this will require us to challenge the bottom-line priority of corporate profitability; for it is this, rather than mismanagement, that is fundamentally responsible for the current economic crisis.

Sam Bowles, David Gordon and Thomas Weisskopf co-authored *Beyond the Wasteland*, published this year by Anchor/Doubleday Press.

CALENDAR

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Werner

Continued from page 24

Classes are offered to families on sanitation, personal hygiene, the causes of illness and treatment. More important, the Piaxtla team trains rural workers who are selected and partially financed by their respective villages. The workers not only learn preventive and curative health care, but also community organizing techniques and problem solving.

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and hold a refresher course or introduce new techniques. The effort has drastically reduced sickness, especially among infants.

Werner's grass-roots organization calculatingly challenges the existing power elite. "Projimo has no problems because everyone wants to help the children," he says. "Piaxtla has problems because it encourages and organizes villagers to fight for their rights."

Originally Werner only meant to teach health care. But as he became familiar with the daily travails of the residents, usually involving landowners and the government, he began to see the connection of health to the social and economic structure. Gradually he came to believe that genuine health improvements required a fundamental change in that

structure.

"There's no such thing as apolitical," he explains. "Where inequities exist, not to take a stand is to side tacitly with abuse. It's a political nonact. Anyone seriously involved with the poor can't help but fight against injustices."

Werner's position has not made him or his programs popular in some Mexican circles. He and the village health workers have been arrested numerous times for criticizing the government, protesting official corruption or openly opposing those who traditionally have controlled the local economy. "Political activity always results in an escalation of harassment," he says.

That attitude also extends to international affairs and tends to restrict the amount of money Werner receives in

IN THESE TIMES MAY 30-JUNE 12, 1984 23 donations. Except for the Peace Corps, he will not accept grants from the federal government because of U.S. support for Third World dictatorships, especially in Latin America. Nor will he accept funds from corporations that actively or passively promote these policies.

While Werner says the foundation can always use more funds, because of book sales and philanthropic contributions, it does not have to struggle to reach its \$300,000 annual operation budget. *Where There Is No Doctor* and its medical companions continue to increase in popularity worldwide.

James Evans works for the California State Bar Association.

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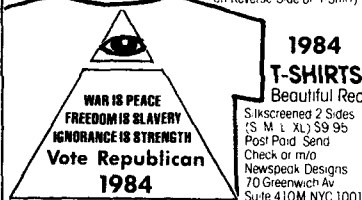
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WHERE THERE'S



NO DOCTOR

By James Evans

David Werner never intended to be a revolutionary when he hiked into the mountains overlooking Mazatlan, Mexico, 20 years ago.

A 29-year-old teacher at an alternative high school in Palo Alto, Calif., Werner went to Mexico to observe birds and plants. What he saw there changed his life and the lives of the villagers he met. It also resulted in *Where There Is No Doctor*, a practical medical guide that has been translated into 23 languages with a distribution of more than a million copies in 115 countries.

"People were so poor and yet so generous," he recalls. "One family invited me to sleep inside because of the chill, and it got so cold they lit a fire in the middle of the night to warm the children. I talked with them but couldn't really see them. In the morning I saw these health problems—things like goiters and infected cuts that could be cured with simple remedies. People there were self-sufficient, but they didn't have knowledge of Western medical science."

Werner returned to his school and consulted with doctors as to what medicines and supplements would be appropriate for the ailments he had seen. He then re-

cruited teenage student volunteers, and together they developed first-aid kits that fit inside large coffee cans and included color-coded directions for easy reference, illustrated by Werner's own cartoons. Next he organized an extended field trip to the mountains, where the volunteers gave a can to each key family in a village.

Recognizing that one can would not go far and determined to provide genuine aid to the villagers, he decided to make the trek into the rugged region regularly with his volunteers, selling his Japanese brush paintings to buy supplies. Within four years he institutionalized his efforts by acquiring the Hesperian Foundation, which had been established to help Biafran refugees. He also convinced a group of Stanford University doctors to go into the area to do corrective work on cleft palates and other deformities.

After six years of a continually expanding program, Werner realized his first-aid instructions were constantly being rewritten, because they were either lost or became too tattered to read. "I decided to write a pamphlet that would hold up longer," he explains, "and I kept thinking of more things to put in it, and so it grew into a book."

Using funds from a private grant, he published *Donde No Hay Doctor* in 1973.

The book was written for villagers Werner knew, but the exhaustive yet simply explained material was immediately recognized as applicable to any undeveloped area of the world.

It covers almost everything associated with the human body, from childbirth and infant nutrition to snake bites and tropical diseases, with sections added or revised for specific cultures. The Arabic edition, for instance, has no pictures of pigs, and the Filipino version shows acupuncture points. The book is considered valuable enough to have been stolen in volume and sold on the black market. In one incident in Africa, an entire truckload of French translations was stolen and quickly sold at a street bazaar.

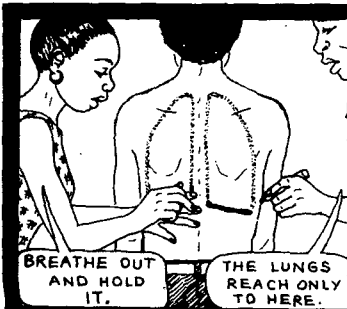
In 1977 the first English printing appeared, and the Peace Corps snapped it up. Now each Peace Corps volunteer receives a copy, and the organization makes copies available in local languages. The books earn about \$40,000 a year from sales, but Werner allows full reproduction without royalty payments if the book is given free to people. When he charges, he sets the price on a sliding scale tied to a company's or individual's ability to pay. All proceeds go to the Hesperian Foundation which, besides revising *Where There Is No Doctor* every few years, publishes

Where There Is No Dentist—by Murray Dickson and *Helping Healthy Workers Learn* by Werner and Bill Bower.

Werner's "revolutionary" influence comes mainly from two other Hesperian programs. The first, Project Projimo, developed as a result of his belief that sending physicians from the U.S. into rural Mexico retarded efforts to train villagers to deal with medical problems. American doctors still visit, but only to train, not to provide care. While that decision accords with Werner's self-help philosophy, it does not provide for low-cost surgery, especially on children with motor deformities from polio and other diseases. So Project Projimo brings children to the Shriners' Hospital in San Francisco, where they receive free corrective surgery and therapy.

The second program is Project Piaxtla, a health-care network that covers a 5,000 square-mile region and serves more than 10,000 residents in the roadless mountains. It is entirely managed and staffed by local villagers, who attend to 98 percent of the health problems they see, despite no formal medical training. For more serious ailments, a referral system sends patients to competent and reasonable doctors in the nearest city. The program emphasizes preventive medicine and health education.

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David Werner's tips for barefoot practitioners

